CENSORING CENSURE

The Nation.

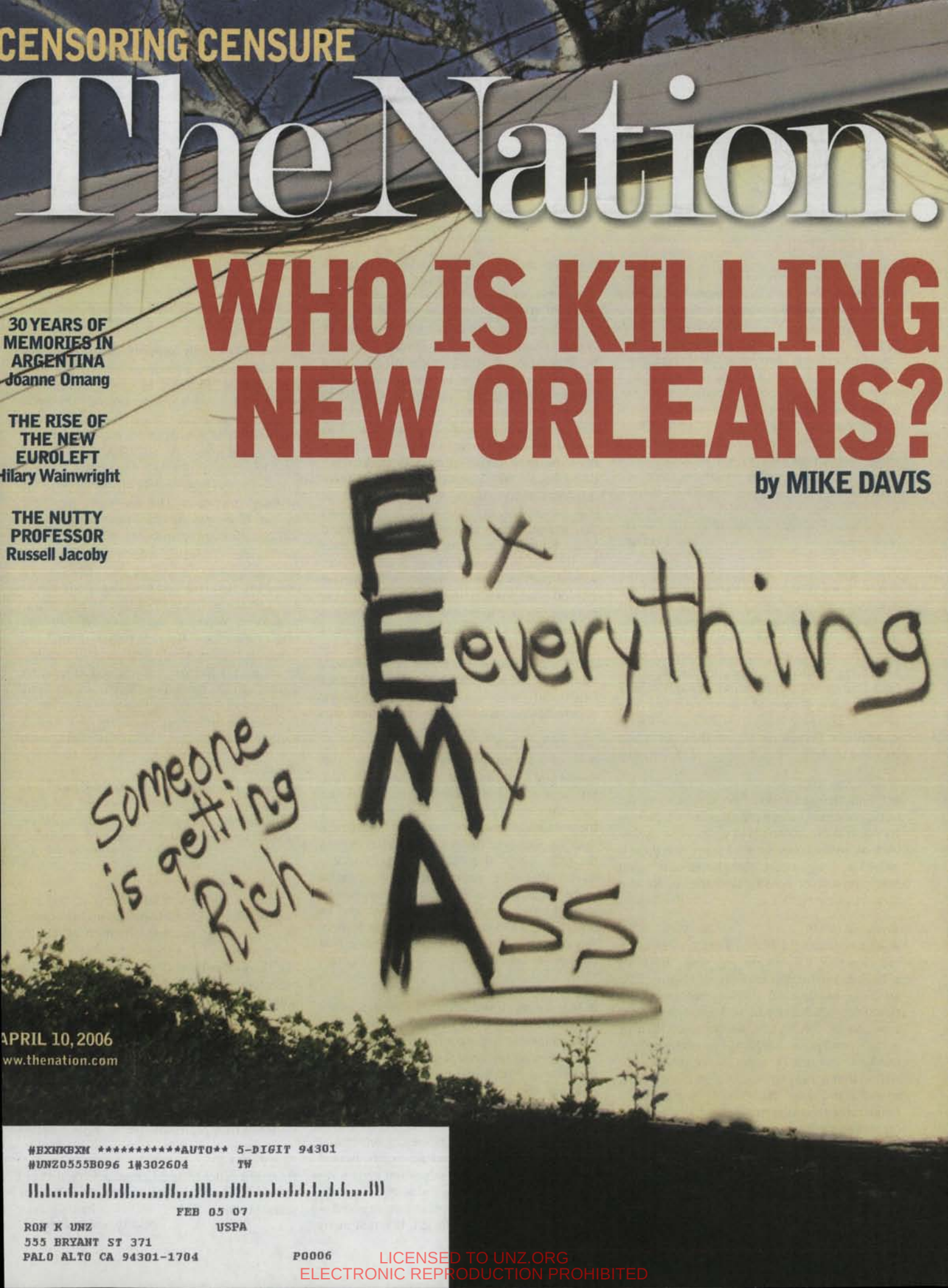
WHO IS KILLING NEW ORLEANS?

by MIKE DAVIS

30 YEARS OF MEMORIES IN ARGENTINA
Joanne Omang

THE RISE OF THE NEW EUROLEFT
Hilary Wainwright

THE NUTTY PROFESSOR
Russell Jacoby



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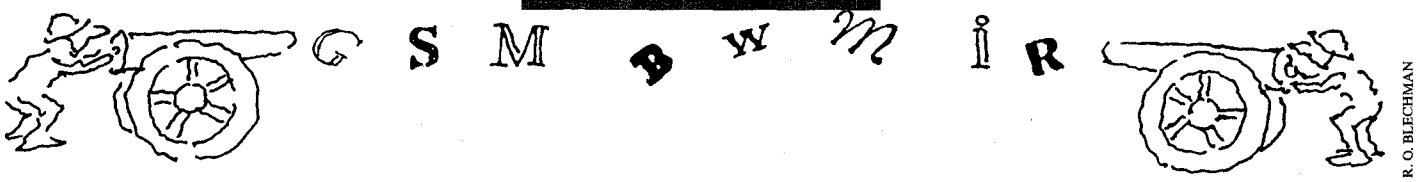

THE ABCs OF BHL

*"A Letter to the American Left" (Feb. 27) by Bernard-Henri Lévy (aka BHL) ignited a firestorm of (mostly) angry mail. Readers described Lévy's writing as "inane," "tripe," "blather," "windbaggery," "*merde*," "condescending and crass," "shortsighted" and "best left to line the bird cage." They called Lévy a "fashionable lightweight," "motor-mouth," "posturing populist," "narcissistic" and an "arrogant," "self-promoting" "rock-star philosopher." Kevin Beavers of Freiburg, Germany, suggests that BHL has been "bumbling about America more like Inspector Clouseau than Tocqueville." Many wrote to inform Lévy that Susan Sontag is dead (an ambiguity of translation caused some to mistake his complimentary invocation of Sontag as referring to her in the present tense).* —THE EDITORS

Minneapolis

■ You heard it here first: Bernard-Henri Lévy is actually an *agent provocateur*. The NSA has planted him to convince all us lefties that everything the right wing says about the French is true: They put on airs; they sneer; they are given to breezy, supercilious pronouncements about broad currents in American society and politics on the basis of little or no information. Don't be taken in. There are many thoughtful, intelligent, sympathetic French people out there. Lévy just isn't one of them. J.D. WALKER

Wilmington, NC

■ I find Bernard-Henri Lévy's view from the outside looking in very enlightening. Our country needs more mirrors held up to show us how we look to the larger world. I agree that there is indeed a strong undercurrent hoping for "great voices capable of echoing their impatience in a momentous way." BEN SCOTT

Brooklyn, NY

■ As someone who follows French intellectual life closely, I can assure you that "BHL" is a buffoon, a human caricature, all the more amusing because he cannot realize what a ridiculous mediocrity he is. He is taken more seriously by the French punditocracy than by actual perceptive intellectuals, philosophers, thinkers or critics. He is the sort of media intellectual that is ruining discourse in this country, as well as in France. Neil Godin, "*le gloupier*," a Belgian pie-throwing prankster, has pied BHL on five occasions, for his pretentious tendentiousness. I realize BHL is having one of his Tocquevillean moments, but that is no reason to print this rubbish. ANDREW DAILY

New York City

■ In France serious people, especially on the left, find Bernard-Henri Lévy to be an egomaniacal poseur and an intellectual fraud, as is meticulously documented by two recent irrefutable books: *Le B.A.-BA du BHL* (The ABCs of BHL), by Jade Lingaard and Xavier de la Porte, and *Une Imposture Française*, by Nicolas Beau and Olivier Toscer. BHL has made a career of attacking the left. So I find *The Nation*'s decision to publish this latest fantasy appalling. BHL's article, however, does contain proof that for him anything goes in his war on the left. He writes, apropos the CIA's special prisons in Eastern Europe, "Since when does the press excuse citizens from their political duties? Why haven't we heard from more intellectuals like Susan Sontag...?" It seems that it never occurred to BHL or the editors that it would be a tad difficult for my friend Susan Sontag to have commented on this issue for the simple reason that she is dead. Susan succumbed to a long illness on December 28, 2004, long before the special prisons were exposed by the press. As someone who has written dozens of articles for *The Nation*, I say shame on it for promoting BHL's garbage and for publishing this embarrassing slander on one of the jewels in America's intellectual firmament—who is, unfortunately, no longer here to defend herself. DOUG IRELAND

San Rafael, Calif.

■ I read Bernard-Henri Lévy's piece with shame and a sinking heart. I am no intellectual, public or other, but I *have* read many books on the subjects Lévy refers to and finish each of them with a greater despair. We've been struck dumb by the sheer virulence of the attacks from the right. Their utter lack of integrity shocks us such that any reasonable rejoinder we might make seems, even to us, like incoherent babble. If might makes right, what is there to say? In my 71 years I've never been faced, at least in this country, with such consummate evil. Is it any wonder we stumble? BRYON EDELEN

Glendalough, Western Australia

■ May I suggest one reason the American left is so invisible—namely, that most of those who have an interest in progressive social change are too busy working several jobs, or many hours, in order to feed themselves and their families and pay the rent. To speak out against the dominant order requires time and energy. It is perhaps easy for someone from France, the land of the thirty-six-hour workweek, a substantial social security system and an amply funded public broadcasting and education system, to be outspoken against the status quo. It is not simply that American popular culture and discourse is firmly against the left. It is that many more of their institutional structures are geared to the crushing of anyone who isn't safely rich or at least well-off. HELEN OLIVIERI

BLACK PAC ON TRACK—NOT WACK

New York City

■ I wholeheartedly support Walter Mosley's proposal to form a black voting bloc ["A New Black Power," Feb. 27]. However, most of the items on his list are race-neutral: universal healthcare, enhanced Social Security, better distribution of wealth and services, reform of the criminal justice system. This is the kind of class-based politics that allowed Bill Clinton to disavow any policies specifically targeted for African-Americans. The message was "Vote for me. If we get universal healthcare, blacks will benefit disproportionately." What we got was welfare "reform," which has visited incalculable harm on African-Americans, and a crime bill that has sent countless poor blacks and Latinos to the prisons that Mosley wants to reform. Where is the "black" in Mosley's black voting bloc? Let me propose items 7 and 8, which Mosley wisely left blank for readers to fill in: (7) Restore and expand affirmative action; (8) A reparations program entailing massive social reconstruction of black communities across the nation, providing jobs, schools and services. STEPHEN STEINBERG

Arnold, Calif.

■ Walter Mosley's "A New Black Power" was right on. Under (7) and (8) I would add total public financing of all Congressional and presidential elections and a ban on all executions. EARL WILLIAMS

Cleveland, Ohio

■ As a middle-aged white woman, I am just as worried as Walter Mosley about healthcare, Social Security, equal distribution of wealth and good jobs "disappearing from this nation like fleas off a dead dog's back." I agree with every item on his list of six demands and would add (7) Outlaw discrimination against people due to their sexual orientation and (8) Declare a woman's basic human right to complete jurisdiction over her own body. JUDY NOVAK

East Lansing, Mich.

■ (7) Adopt instant-runoff voting; (8) Eventually set up proportional representation: make Congress truly representative. RAOUL MITTS

New York City

■ (7) The blues (Blind Lemon Jefferson et al.) should be taught in public schools as part of social studies. TOM KILLIAN

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EDITORIALS

Neglect in New Orleans

More than six months after one of the worst natural disasters to hit the United States, a perfect storm of malign neglect on the federal, state and local levels continues to batter the victims of Hurricane Katrina. The overwhelming scale of destruction wrought by the hurricane required a comprehensive, federally directed plan of reconstruction, including the rebuilding of levees and the restoration of coastal wetlands, yet the record of the past six months is one of promises unkept, funding delayed and denied, and machinations of politicians and their corporate cronies to profit from the catastrophe. The net effect has been the disenfranchisement and continued displacement of the poor and minority population of New Orleans, which suffered disproportionately from the hurricane.

After months of delay, in late March the House approved a $19.1 billion Gulf Coast aid package, including $4.2 billion in block grants for housing needs. Yet as Chris Kromm of Gulf Coast Reconstruction Watch (www.reconstructionwatch.org) points out, the bill—passed less than three months before June 1, the official start of hurricane season—comes way too late and is far short of what's needed. The House rejected an amendment that would have provided $465 million to strengthen levees. And although the bill includes $1 billion to rebuild rental housing—crucial, since most displaced residents were renters—Congress turned back an amendment that would have prevented FEMA from evicting residents from temporary housing until alternatives were found (even as the bill was passed, families were being evicted from hotels in New Orleans).

The House bill does little or nothing to fix other structural problems, including the city's devastated healthcare system (fifteen out of the city's twenty-two hospitals are now closed, including Charity Hospital, which cared for most of the city's uninsured population), its public school system (only twenty of 117 pre-storm schools are functioning, sixteen of them now as charter schools) and its toxin-laden environment. And the Senate doesn't plan to discuss its version of the bill until May.

At the same time, the city's black and overwhelmingly Democratic electorate has been effectively disenfranchised. The House rejected an amendment that would have provided $50 million to help storm-ravaged communities organize elections, and the Justice Department approved the first New Orleans municipal elections since the storm, even though the city has no plans to provide out-of-state balloting. Up to two-thirds of the displaced are living out of state, a large majority African-American.

The neglect at the federal level is matched by the hijacking of democratic structures at the local level. As Mike Davis demonstrates in an article that begins on page 11, the city's reconstruction effort has been taken over by a coterie of business elites and real estate developers, who have used mayor-appointed commissions to bypass elected officials in an effort to turn New Orleans into a smaller, whiter, more conservative city.

But the people of New Orleans are fighting back. The community-organizing group ACORN and other grassroots organizations, including the People's Hurricane Relief Fund, the Common Ground collective, the Justice Center and the New Orleans Green Party, are working to repair homes, rebuild communities and fight for the rights of displaced citizens. They've been joined recently by military veterans who make the connection between the destruction of Iraq and the devastation of New Orleans. One Iraq War vet is quoted on *The Nation*'s website as saying, "What my country has become sickens me." The people of New Orleans need his solidarity—and ours—if the city's second Reconstruction is to avoid going the way of the first.

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COMMENT

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Censoring Censure

If there remained any doubt about whether US Senator Russ Feingold did the right thing when he moved to censure President Bush for illegally ordering warrantless wiretapping of Americans, it should have been removed by the news that the Wisconsin Democrat's call for accountability immediately earned the wrath of Vice President Dick Cheney, Washington's pre-eminent advocate of executive excess. Rejecting the suggestion that citizens might be concerned about the Administration's disregard for laws written to protect the constitutionally defined right of Americans to be secure from secret searches and seizures, Cheney said, "The American people have already made their decision. They agree with the President."

Cheney knows that's not the case. The warrantless wiretapping was kept strictly secret before the 2004 presidential election—by the White House and by the *New York Times*, which apparently had the story—so voters never had an opportunity to decide whether they wanted to re-elect a President who first lied to them about the spying and then, when caught, brazenly declared that he would continue to authorize eavesdropping on the phone conversations of US citizens.

If Cheney was deliberately disingenuous, so too were Republican political operatives who churned up the spin machine to suggest that the censure move would mark the Democrats as vindictive Bush haters and doom their prospects in November's Congressional elections. That fantasy was dispelled by an American Research Group poll that showed a slight plurality of Americans supporting censure, with Democrats backing it overwhelmingly, independents split and a remarkable 29 percent of GOP loyalists in favor of making Bush the first President since Andrew Jackson to be called to account by the Senate.

Unfortunately, the group of Americans that mattered most in the immediate aftermath of Feingold's announcement, his Democratic colleagues, displayed little enthusiasm for a fight. No one doubts that most, if not all, Senate Democrats share John Kerry's tepid but true "I think he broke the law" statement. This was Kerry's assessment of the President's refusal to follow the guidelines of the Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act, which requires a warrant for domestic wiretaps, when he directed the National Security Agency to begin listening in on the phone conversations of Americans without required judicial oversight. Yet only Iowa's Tom Harkin and California's Barbara Boxer expressed support for Feingold's censure motion before senators exited Washington for spring break. While Rhode Island Republican Lincoln Chafee hailed Feingold's motion as a "positive" vehicle for promoting debate about constitutional concerns, the majority of Demo-

ON THE WEB: Jeff Chester looks at Google's plan to make San Francisco a wi-fi zone and the privacy tradeoffs Internet users will face; Max Blumenthal writes on the return of David Duke to the political arena (www.thenation.com).

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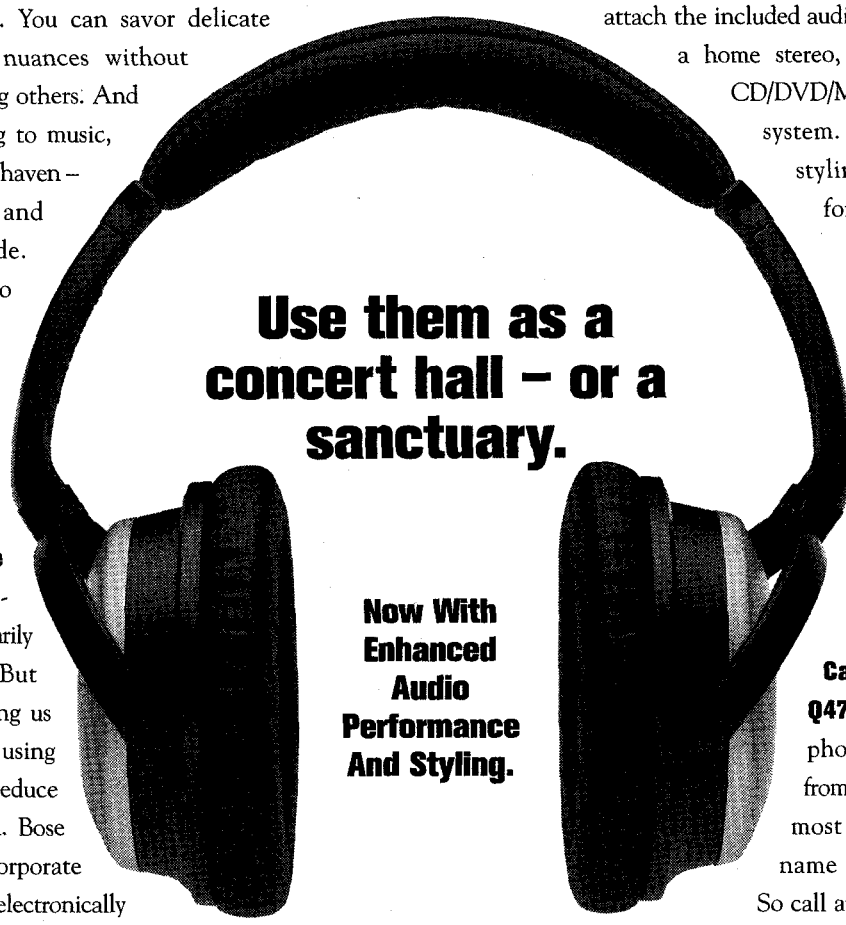

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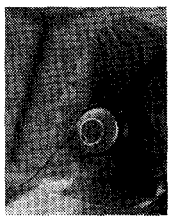

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COMMENT

cratic senators, some of them stung by the fact that the maverick Feingold had not consulted them but most merely as cautious as ever, either refused to comment or expressed a preference, as did Connecticut's Joe Lieberman, for working with Republicans to construct cover for the Administration's lawbreaking by rewriting rules regarding surveillance programs.

The line that has been peddled quietly by a number of the senators, and somewhat more loudly by pundits—when they aren't crudely claiming Feingold raised censure only to distinguish himself as a 2008 presidential candidate—is that this is the wrong time for Congressional Democrats to develop a spine. With Bush's poll ratings sliding to record lows, and with indications that Americans are ready for change, Democratic insiders are afraid to do anything that might upset their chances in November. The fear is that being "too tough" on Bush—by, say, demanding that the Administration obey the law—will make Democrats appear shrill and cost the party's candidates votes this fall.

Apart from the fact that White House political czar Karl Rove's spin machine will label Democrats "shrill," not to mention "unpatriotic," simply for suggesting that voters shift control of the House and Senate from the President's party, the rejection of censure—a more moderate rebuke than the articles of impeachment that a growing number of Bush critics on the left and right, including Bruce Fein, an associate deputy attorney general in the Reagan Administration, suggest are appropriate—put the

Looking for Answers in Argentina

by Joanne Omang

My husband and I have a running debate over "progress." News junkies, we routinely argue over whether a development somewhere is forward movement or not. He holds, for example, that most accounts of human rights abuse are boilerplate from the 1960s, with blanks to fill in for new names. Things are arguably worse on the human rights front, not better, he says. I reply that noise is good. Dictators who once yawned at the idea of human rights now at least pay lip service to it, even if they run secret torture centers. Rhetoric has consequences. Yes, he says: More people are angry and unhappy. I say that's because they now aspire where they used to be hopeless and silent. And so on.

This was the context in which we recently spent three weeks in Argentina, where human rights abuse was once the norm. I was there as the *Washington Post* South America correspondent when the generals took over thirty years ago, on March 24, 1976, and I wrote some of the first stories when they launched their bloody war against leftist dissidents. I helped create the new language of *los desaparecidos*, the "disappeared." By pure chance, I was also there in January, when some of the players in that drama wrote a formal end to the story. It was that rarest of moments, a glimpse of the entire dramatic arc, one the principals claimed was actual progress. But was it?

On April 13, 1977, a dozen or so Argentine mothers, despairing of learning what had happened to their children, put on white kerchiefs and gathered at the 220-foot obelisk in Buenos Aires's Plaza de Mayo. This is where generations of Argentines have demonstrated, where Juan Perón mobilized his *descamisados*, the shirtless ones, where Evita cried from the balcony of the presidential Casa Rosada; it is where the generals years later rallied support for the invasion of the Malvinas Islands (*a k a* the Falklands), which eventually brought them down. The plaza is Argentina's living room. The mothers, carrying photos of their disappeared loved ones above small signs asking WHERE ARE THEY?, marched slowly and in silence around the obelisk.

Few people noticed, including me. My *Post* story that day was headlined "Repression Is Keeping Latin American Left on the Retreat." It noted that resistance was "impossible to measure so long as speaking up risks extermination." But none of the nearby soldiers opened fire on the mothers, and they weren't arrested. They returned the following week, and again the week after. For nearly thirty years they marched every Thursday afternoon, demanding justice. A few of them disappeared, but the others marched, Thursday after Thursday.

People soon did notice: The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo became world icons of courageous demands for accountability, the assertion of human rights. Their march inspired poetry and dissidents the world over; it won awards from UNESCO and the European Parliament, among others. What dictator would dare mow down a group of grieving women?

As the years passed, the mothers quarreled. Some wanted to compromise with this new leader or that; some denounced others as sellouts or media hounds. They split into factions. Which was more important, healing the nation's wounds or learning what had happened to every last disappeared person? Should they also demand action on unemployment and homeless street children? A group of grandmothers started their own march. The mothers' annual twenty-four-hour "March of Resistance," which began in 1981, became a media circus. Their politics over the years seemed to mirror the tortured politics of Argentina itself.

Who could follow all that? I couldn't, and didn't. But I wanted to return to Argentina, not only to revise some painful memories but also to see the tourist spots I never had time for as a foreign correspondent. So I was stunned on arriving for a politics-free vacation to learn that the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo would be holding their final March of Resistance the very next day. Well, it would be just one faction of the Mothers, albeit a major faction. And it wouldn't be their final Thursday march, albeit their 1,500th, just the final annual March of Resistance. And it wouldn't even be the last annual march of the other faction, the so-called Founding Mothers. But still I had to go. It felt like the closure I had hoped for.

On January 26 the plaza was only lightly crowded, nothing like the cheek-to-cheek crushes of many rallies I had covered there. Faded paintings of white scarves on the pavement testi-

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COMMENT

Democrats right back in the corner of overly calculated caution where they positioned themselves for the miserable 2002 and 2004 election cycles.

The opposition party that too rarely opposes appears to stand for nothing. There does not seem to be any principle, not even respect for the rule of law, that motivates most Democrats. As such, they come off as the party that will compromise on anything and everything in order to win elections. In so doing, cynical Democrats create another undeserved opening for Republicans who have argued, time and again and with considerable success, that Bush, Cheney and their Congressional allies may not always get things right but at least they operate from a place of conviction. JOHN NICHOLS

Giving Americans a Raise

The federal minimum wage has been stuck at $5.15 an hour for more than eight and a half years. If Congress fails to pass an increase by December of this year, it will be the longest stretch of stinginess in American history. The states are sick of waiting.

In the past sixteen months, eleven states and the District of Columbia have raised their minimum wage. In February Rhode Island's legislature overwhelmingly voted to pass HB6718, hiking the state's minimum to $7.40 by the start of 2007. Governor Donald Carcieri had threatened to veto the bill, but, facing

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fied to the mothers' claim to the turf. The obelisk was obscured by a scaffolding of photographs—the faces of the disappeared, still wrenching. Human rights activists say that about 30,000 people disappeared during the "dirty war," and no one is sure how many cases remain unresolved.

As the mothers assembled, hundreds of reporters and cameras pushed and shoved, wanting to know why they were doing this, why now. "We no longer have an enemy in the Casa Rosada," declared Hebe de Bonafini, leader of the Association of the Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo. President Néstor Kirchner, she said, "is a friend" with "good intentions" who has "opened the doors of the Casa Rosada to us." Then she lined up with about twenty other older women, and they began their last twenty-four hours of marching slowly around the obelisk. In front they carried a banner that would have turned on the machine guns in 1976: DISTRIBUTE THE WEALTH, NOW! Behind them, people crowded in to march along, some with other banners that would have been welcome in Red Square: Che Guevara's famous face, the leftist People's Revolutionary Army, other once-clandestine groups. I looked around for the guns that were everywhere in my day, but I saw only a few smiling policemen in orange vests, their pistols holstered. On the plaza's edges, vendors sold pamphlets and soda and maté gourds.

"For once we're all together," said Ileana, 34, who grew up amid family whispers about a disappeared uncle. Watching from the sidelines, she declined to give her last name, but her eyes brimmed with tears. "It's a very emotional moment for me." Minutes later, however, an older man buttonholed me. "Are you a journalist?" he demanded. "Tell your people I don't agree with these women." A retired machinist, he was trying to live on about $50 a month. "It can't be done! This government is useless!" The disappeared are not the only issue now, even for the Mothers. I asked Marcela Bruzuela, 75, to tell me her personal story. She refused. "We are marching for all our sons," she said, "and so that no child will be homeless from now on."

Newspapers the next day quoted de Bonafini heralding a "historic moment" in which Kirchner's election was part of a Latin democratic turn to the left, with Bolivia's Morales, Venezuela's Chávez, Brazil's Lula da Silva and Chile's Bachelet. "We're achieving revolutions through the democratic process, without shedding blood," she said.

So what does it mean? In theory, democracy picks leaders who promise what voters want, and then keeps them in office only if they deliver. It sounds so simple. De Bonafini praised Kirchner for listening and holding meetings, and it's true that generals don't do that: Democracy is noisy. But we jaded ones know money is what really talks. Who are "the people"? Whose op-eds get printed? Who gets invited to the meetings where the goodies are divided? Kirchner promised change, but all politicians do. Democracy needs to know what a government actually does, as opposed to what it says it is doing. The Mothers made history by pointing out the difference. Reality in the United States now includes eavesdropping and prison camps. Can people ever really get what they vote for?

Like the machinist, many Argentines doubt Kirchner's ability or desire to deliver. Inflation is rising and corruption charges accumulate. The vision of Argentina *potencia*—as strong and prosperous as every Argentine knows it could be, if only its leaders would do the right thing—seems as "potential" as it did in 1976. But two things felt firm to me: No one risks extermination now by sounding off, and no one seems worried that the lists of the disappeared might lengthen again. The Mothers of the Plaza de Mayo, even those still marching, are not adding new names. They are making new demands.

For me, remembering the blood and the bullets and the silences of thirty years ago, those two facts are real progress. Democracy, like desire, never runs out of new demands. Making them is only the first step, but it's critical, which is why we have a First Amendment. "Argentina's democracy is strong enough to let the leftists march and shout without having to do anything to them—or for them either," said observer and economist Judith Evans, a longtime friend. She's right. In a true democracy some demands get met, some don't, depending on so many factors it's exhausting to think about. We don't know if Argentina is fully there yet. But in the meantime, Argentina's mothers are moving on, loudly. I think we can chalk up one win.

Joanne Omang covered Latin American affairs for the Washington Post *in the 1970s and '80s.*

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tremendous opposition, he dropped his effort and signed it into law. And in March Michigan's Republican-dominated Senate unanimously approved a measure that would increase the state's minimum by 44 percent over the next two years. Michigan, which had stalled at the federal standard for the past nine years, will have one of the most generous minimums in the country, $7.40, by July 2008.

Michigan's wage hike "came out of nowhere," according to Senate Democratic leader Bob Emerson of Flint. Republican leaders acted quickly in response to a rapidly moving ballot drive that sought to add an amendment to Michigan's Constitution requiring the state's minimum to rise annually with the rate of inflation. Signatures for the ballot measure were pouring in, and a recent poll showed that 80 percent of Michiganders favored a higher minimum.

"These victories are the latest in what's shaping up to be a minimum-wage revolution in the states," says Jen Kern, director of ACORN's Living Wage Resource Center.

Thanks to legal assistance from the Brennan Center for Justice at NYU and the Ballot Initiative Strategy Center, economic guidance from the Economic Policy Institute and grassroots efforts from organizations like ACORN, the National Council of Churches and hundreds of community groups, wage hikes in Massachusetts, Pennsylvania, New Mexico and North Carolina also seem likely in the near future. Meanwhile, ballot initiatives for minimum-wage increases in 2006 could emerge in as many as ten other states. An initiative is already on the ballot in Nevada, and states including Arizona, Ohio and Montana are in the midst of collecting signatures.

Across the nation there is massive support for raising the federal minimum wage; according to a recent Pew poll, 86 percent of Americans favor an increase. Even if Congress continues to ignore the popular will, the battle for a higher minimum wage rages on in the states.

KATRINA VANDEN HEUVEL AND SAM GRAHAM-FELSEN

Nation editor and publisher Katrina vanden Heuvel and Nation contributor Sam Graham-Felsen co-write regular web installments of "Sweet Victories" in Editor's Cut at www.thenation.com. Beginning with this issue, monthly versions will appear in the magazine.

Israel's Backward March

Israelis will be going to the polls in late March with the hope of resolving the Israeli-Palestinian conflict once and for all. The new political party Kadima, which means "forward" in Hebrew, promised as much and is expected to win the day, while the country's long-established ruling parties, Labor and Likud, will lose their traditional place at the helm.

Although the refreshing social-justice discourse introduced by Labor's new leader, the Moroccan-born union advocate Amir Peretz, did inject energy into the shattered party, he failed to garner the support many had hoped for. His position regarding the Israeli-Palestinian conflict has been rightly criticized as incoherent, and it also appears that many of Labor's longtime Ashkenazi voters have deserted the party ranks because they are unwilling to be led by a Mizrahi Jew.

Likud's situation is even worse. Following the creation of Kadima it lost about half its cohort and has been increasingly characterized as an extremist party that represents the settlers' uncompromising ideology. Moreover, during his tenure as finance minister, party leader Benjamin Netanyahu introduced unpopular Thatcherite policies that pushed hundreds of thousands of Israelis under the poverty line.

Kadima's meteoric ascent in the polls stems, in part, from a pervasive yearning for a centrist party that will solve the Israeli-Palestinian conflict. While the party has very little to say about the country's other ills, Acting Prime Minister Ehud Olmert's bold declaration that Kadima will unilaterally determine Israel's international borders is one of the secrets behind its all but certain electoral victory.

Kadima's line is straightforward. It claims that there is a contradiction between Israel's geographic and demographic aspirations: As the settlement project deepened its hold on the occupied territories, the very idea of Israel as a Jewish state, where Jews are the majority, has been undermined. In other words, the fact that the majority of people living between the Jordan Valley and the Mediterranean Sea are not Jewish underscores the impossibility of achieving the vision of a Greater Israel while maintaining a Jewish state.

The party's idea is to redraw unilaterally the borders between Israel and the Palestinian territories and thus to alter radically the region's demographic and geographic reality. Last summer's Gaza pullout constituted the plan's first stage. In a recent interview for *Ha'aretz*, Olmert outlined the next stage, explaining that Ariel Sharon's so-called security barrier will become Israel's political border. But what in fact does the conversion of the security barrier into a political border imply?

Demographically, the barrier will surround forty-eight Jewish settlements from the east, so that 171,000 of the West Bank's settlers will be incorporated into Israel's expanded state. The wall being built in East Jerusalem is meant to reinforce

(Continued on Page 24)

CALVIN TRILLIN

A Summary of Remarks By George W. Bush and Dick Cheney on the Third Anniversary of the Invasion of Iraq

Our strategy for peace there
Is really working well.
It's just that all the killing
Can make it hard to tell.

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ALEXANDER COCKBURN

Why There's No Strategy to End This War

My local town of Eureka in northwest California had a pretty good peace rally on March 18, to mark the third anniversary of the US attack on Iraq. They've put them on every year, including a big one just before the war started. An ad hoc local group called Communities for Peace worked for eight weeks and, with the help of Veterans for Peace, pulled 2,000 people into the municipal auditorium on F Street. There were plenty of young people, and the crowd sat a bit restlessly through three speeches before hitting the streets. There were four marching bands.

They headed down to the square in Old Town, next to the rehabbed waterfront, where I was the designated final speaker. I cheered them all up by telling them no one present should ever look in the mirror and tell themselves they're not smart enough to run the country. The country is being run by morons.

I read out some of the more spectacular moron predictions from 2003, finishing up with Chris Matthews on MSNBC, "We're all neocons now," and *Vanity Fair*'s answer to Clausewitz, Christopher Hitchens: "This will be no war—there will be a fairly brief and ruthless military intervention.... The president will give an order. [The attack] will be rapid, accurate and dazzling.... It will be greeted by the majority of the Iraqi people as an emancipation. And I say, bring it on."

I told them that two out of three Americans now oppose the war. The problem is not in the heartland. The problem is at the national level. There is no visible national strategy to end the war and bring the troops home. I attribute this in considerable part to the disastrous fealty to the Democrats of the leadership of some of the big organizations. This explains why United for Peace and Justice, for example, was missing in action for most of 2004. It didn't want to rock the Kerry boat, even as Capt. Kerry was drilling holes in its hull.

Then I read to the crowd Dana Milbank's account in the *Washington Post* of how Russ Feingold's Senate colleagues have reacted to his motion of censure of a President who has used the Bill of Rights to clean up after his dog.

Barack Obama of Illinois: "I haven't read it."

John Kerry of Massachusetts: "I really can't [comment] right now."

Hillary Clinton of New York rushed past reporters shaking her head, then trying to hide behind the 4'11" Barbara Mikulski.

Charles Schumer of New York, who would normally run over his grandmother to get to a microphone: "I'm not going to comment."

Chris Dodd of Connecticut: "Most of us feel at best it's premature. I don't think anyone can say with any certainty at this juncture that what happened [the NSA's eavesdropping] is illegal."

Even while I was speaking, the weekend news shows were detailing the latest campaign plan of the Congressional Democrats. It's called "Real Security." And no, "security" here doesn't mean a living wage, a pension, a health plan and no stop-loss order for your kid to stay in Iraq. It means guns and cops and lots of flag-wagging.

"Real Security" calls for Democrats to hinge the 2006 campaign on how the Republicans have failed us on the issue of national security. Harry Reid says Democrats should wrap themselves in the flag, have tanks as backdrop and then try to outflank the GOP from the right with demands for increased military funding, a better-fought war, tighter borders and ports run by white, American-born Christians, preferably free of radical organizers from the ILWU.

As reported in the *Washington Times*, Reid's strategy memo advises: "Ensure that you have the proper U.S. and state flags at the event, and consider finding someone to sing the national anthem and lead the group in the Pledge of Allegiance at the start of the event." Next up was Joe Biden, standing between two gold-fringed flags, and probably with Old Glory underwear, telling the press that "to the extent that Bush fails in Iraq, American interests are seriously damaged, and I'm rooting for his success, not his failure." This is the man who explained his twenty-minute opening speech at the Alito hearings by saying he wanted to put the nominee at ease.

So what are we looking at down the road in the next year or two? A bunch of national Democrats like Hillary Clinton screaming about illegal immigrants and voting to fund a wall running from Corpus Christi to San Diego, staffed by Israeli death squads. If the war gets mentioned at all, it'll be back to the old winning Kerry formula: We'll fight it better. They'll be drawing up Patriot Act III, plus new national ID cards and cameras on every street corner, just like the ones they're installing in Britain.

Feingold will make a great showing in the early primaries, then get creamed by the Democratic machine. He'll give a powerful speech at the convention, pledging allegiance to the candidate.

The Republicans will probably win again. Good luck to them. Who wants Democrats to get in, just to run a better police state, the way Blair and New Labour have in Britain, where, last time I looked, the government was planning to gas every badger from Lands End to Cape Wrath?

Who wants Democrats to get in to run a better Empire? In the Bush years Latin America is seeing a new dawn, with Hugo Chávez publicly deriding our Commander in Chief as a drunkard and sending cheap heating oil to the poor in the Northeast. In the Bush years two professors, from Harvard and the University of Chicago, have published an eighty-three-page paper outlining exactly why slavish deference to the Israel lobby is hurting America. I don't think that would have happened in Clinton's time. At some level, there's a lot to be said for having morons in charge—at least until the sort of people I was talking to last Saturday can organize a party to take over, and start the long business of returning the country to sanity. Feingold should make a break for it now, split like La Follette and really stir things up. God knows, we need it. ■

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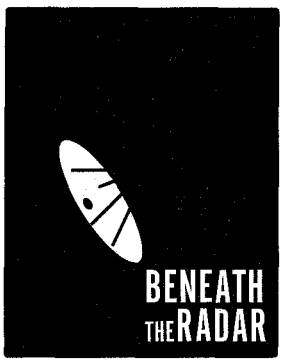
GARY YOUNGE

Left's Labour Lost

London



The novelist Doris Lessing once said of British Prime Minister Tony Blair: "He believes in magic. That if you say a thing, it is true." For almost nine years he has governed as though he could mold reality out of statements alone, insisting for example that the terrorist attacks of July 7 last year had nothing to do with Britain's involvement in Iraq when all the evidence suggested otherwise.

But lately the magic has been wearing off. The discrepancies between what Blair says and what is true have become so great and so many that his entire premiership appears set to implode under the weight of its own contradictions.

He has already promised to step down before the next election—due in 2010 at the latest. The issue now seems to be whether he will be able to choose the timing of his own departure or whether events will choose it for him. In mid-March the *Economist* and the *Guardian*—both of which backed him last year—called for his resignation.

As the co-architect of Labour's shift to the right, Blair's heir apparent, Gordon Brown, represents a shift in personality rather than political trajectory. Nonetheless, whenever it comes, Blair's departure will be greeted heartily by the left. But the truth is that his tenure has exposed our inability, not just locally but globally, to develop a coherent and substantive response to those centrist parties that put a gun to our head on polling day and warn us that a vote for anyone else will let in the right. If Blair has taught us anything, it is that while the interests of these parties may at times coincide with ours, our priorities and victories should never be confused with theirs.

Two recent episodes in particular have made Blair vulnerable. First there was the "cash for ermine" scandal, during which he was forced to admit he knew that three wealthy men he had nominated for peerages in the House of Lords had collectively made soft loans of £3.5 million ($6 million) to the Labour Party. Blair knew about the donations, but neither the party treasurer nor the deputy prime minister did.

Second was his education bill, which despite Labour's parliamentary majority of sixty-nine he could only push through because the Tories supported it. The bill would essentially privatize education and dump poor and minority children in the worst schools, prompting fifty-two Labour MPs to vote against it.

Viewed in isolation, neither of these events would have been a deal-breaker. But both were emblematic of Blair's tenure. Between them they exposed his contempt for the interests of his most loyal constituency—the working poor—along with his distance from the party in whose name he governs and the degree to which he is embedded with conservatives and monied interests.

Given these traits, what is truly amazing is not that Blair's position is precarious now but that he wasn't ousted before. His ascendancy owes itself in no small part to the electoral defeats that preceded him and to the particular history of the Labour Party. Labour was founded by the unions to represent the interests of working people in Parliament and was always a broad church. Whereas in the rest of Europe the social democratic and communist traditions were represented by two separate parties, in Britain the majority of each tradition found a home within Labour. When Blair was elected party leader in 1994, the Conservatives had been in power for fifteen punishing years. The Labour leadership attributed its problems at the polls to being too radical.

For the next three years, the mantra went that in order for Labour to win, the left within the party first had to lose. Weakening the links with the trade unions, disabling the levers of internal democracy and ditching its commitment to unilateral nuclear disarmament were all sold as pragmatic concessions necessary to insure a Labour victory. When Labour finally came to power in 1997, this rightward shift had curdled into a dogma. It stood for office but little in the way of principle. It went on to win two more elections with ever diminishing minorities, while conceding almost every substantive argument to the right. Rebellions, defections and dissent would all be answered with the question: "Who would you rather have in power: us or the Tories?"

The trouble was, at times you really couldn't tell the difference. A recent survey by the Institute for Fiscal Studies revealed that economic inequality in Britain has remained virtually unchanged since Labour came to power. Meanwhile, racial discourse has degraded, asylum seekers have been criminalized and fascism has returned in some areas as a potent political force. Indeed, by the time of the Iraq War the party's historical project had been all but extinguished. Blair had leapfrogged social democracy and Gaullism and landed in the lap of the neocons and Italian Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi.

That is not to say that nothing valuable has emerged from Labour's reign. We now have a minimum wage (albeit set at an inadequate level); civil unions for gay couples passed this past December with little fuss; and while inequality has risen poverty has also been reduced, with 700,000 children no longer living in destitution. But Labour's relationship to the working class came to resemble James Baldwin's description of the North's treatment of African-Americans in the United States: "What it promised it did not give, and what it gave, at length and grudgingly with one hand, it took back with the other."

Eventually Labour mutated from an imperfect conduit of progressive change into an active obstacle to it. This posed a real dilemma for progressives. No electoral force has emerged to the left of Labour that is capable of replacing it, and no internal force has proved capable of returning it to its roots. Nowhere has this been clearer than over the Iraq War. Our ability to mobilize millions in the biggest demonstration in the nation's history and to maintain the pressure on Blair throughout has revealed the strength of our arguments. Our inability to give that mobilization an electoral expression has exposed the weakness of our applications. We have shown we can get mad; we have not yet found a way to get even.■

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ARTICLES

WHO IS KILLING NEW ORLEANS?

by MIKE DAVIS

A few blocks from the badly flooded and still-closed campus of Dillard University, a wind-bent street sign announces the intersection of Humanity and New Orleans. In the nighttime distance, the downtown skyscrapers on Poydras and Canal Streets are already ablaze with light, but a vast northern and eastern swath of the city, including the Gentilly neighborhood around Dillard, remains shrouded in darkness.

The lights have been out for six months now, and no one seems to know when, if ever, they will be turned back on. In greater New Orleans about 125,000 homes remain damaged and unoccupied, a vast ghost city that rots in darkness while *les bon temps* return to a guilty strip of unflooded and mostly affluent neighborhoods near the river. Such a large portion of the black population is gone that some radio stations are now switching their formats from funk and rap to soft rock.

Mayor Ray Nagin likes to boast that "New Orleans is back," pointing to the tourists who again prowl the French Quarter and the Tulane students who crowd Magazine Street bistros; but the current population of New Orleans on the west bank of the Mississippi is about the same as that of Disney World on a normal day. More than 60 percent of Nagin's constituents—including an estimated 80 percent of the African-Americans—are still scattered in exile with no obvious way home.

In their absence, local business elites, advised by conservative think tanks, "New Urbanists" and neo-Democrats, have usurped almost every function of elected government. With the City Council largely shut out of their deliberations, mayor-appointed commissions and outside experts, mostly white and Republican, propose to radically shrink and reshape a majority-black and Democratic city. Without any mandate from local voters, the public-school system has already been virtually abolished, along with the jobs of unionized teachers and school employees. Thousands of other unionized jobs have been lost with the closure of Charity Hospital, formerly the flagship of public medicine in Louisiana. And a proposed oversight board, dominated by appointees of President Bush and Governor Kathleen Babineaux Blanco, would end local control over city finances.

Meanwhile, Bush's pledge to "get the work done quickly" and mount "one of the largest reconstruction efforts the world has ever seen" has proved to be the same fool's gold as his earlier guarantee to rebuild Iraq's bombed-out infrastructure. Instead, the Administration has left the residents of neighborhoods like Gentilly in limbo: largely without jobs, emergency housing, flood protection, mortgage relief, small-business loans or a coordinated plan for reconstruction.

With each passing week of neglect—what Representative Barney Frank has labeled "a policy of ethnic cleansing by inaction"—the likelihood increases that most black Orleanians will never be able to return.

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Lie and Stall

After his bungling initial response to Katrina, Bush impersonated FDR and Lyndon Johnson when he reassured the nation in his September 15 Jackson Square speech that "we have a duty to confront [New Orleans's] poverty with bold action.... We will do what it takes, we will stay as long as it takes to help citizens rebuild their communities and their lives."

In the event, the White House sat on its pledges all autumn, mumbling homilies about the limits of government, while its conservative attack dogs in Congress offset Gulf relief with $40 billion worth of cutbacks in Medicaid, food stamps and student loans. Republicans also rebelled against aid for a state that was depicted as a venal Third World society, a failed state like Haiti, out of step with national values. "Louisiana and New Orleans," according to Idaho Senator Larry Craig, "are the most corrupt governments in our country and they always have been.... Fraud is in the culture of Iraqis. I believe that is true in the state of Louisiana as well."

Democrats, apart from the Congressional Black Caucus, did pathetically little to counter this backlash or to hold Bush's feet to the fire over his Jackson Square pledge. The promised national debate about urban poverty never took place; instead, New Orleans, like a great derelict ship, drifted helplessly in the treacherous currents of White House hypocrisy and conservative contempt.

An early, deadly blow was Treasury Secretary John Snow's refusal to guarantee New Orleans municipal bonds, forcing Mayor Nagin to lay off 3,000 city employees on top of the thousands of education and medical workers already jobless. The Bush Administration also blocked bipartisan measures to increase Medicaid coverage for Katrina evacuees and to give the State of Louisiana—facing an estimated $8 billion in lost revenues over the next few years—a share of the income generated by its offshore oil and gas leases.

Even more egregious was the flagrant redlining of black neighborhoods by the Small Business Administration (SBA), which rejected a majority of loan applications by local businesses and homeowners. At the same time, a bipartisan Senate bill to save small businesses with emergency bridge loans was sabotaged by Bush officials, leaving thousands to face bankruptcy and foreclosure. As a result, the economic foundations of the city's African-American middle class (public-sector jobs and small businesses) have been swept away by deliberate decisions made in the White House. Meanwhile, in the absence of federal or state initiatives to employ locals, low-income blacks are losing their niches in the construction and service sectors to more mobile outsiders.

In stark contrast to its neglect of neighborhood relief, the White House has made herculean efforts to reward its own base of large corporations and political insiders. Representative Nydia Velazquez, who sits on the House Small Business Committee, pointed out that the SBA has allowed large corporations to get $2 billion in federal contracts while excluding local minority contractors.

Mike Davis is working on a history of modern New Orleans. His latest books are The Monster at Our Door *(New Press) and* Planet of Slums *(Verso).*

The paramount beneficiaries of Katrina relief aid have been the giant engineering firms KBR (a Halliburton subsidiary) and the Shaw Group, which enjoy the services of lobbyist Joe Allbaugh (a former FEMA director and Bush's 2000 campaign manager). FEMA and the Army Corps of Engineers, while unable to explain to Governor Blanco last fall exactly how they were spending money in Louisiana, have tolerated levels of profiteering that would raise eyebrows even on the war-torn Euphrates. (Some of this largesse, of course, is guaranteed to be recycled as GOP campaign contributions.) FEMA, for example, has paid the Shaw Group $175 per square (100 square feet) to install tarps on storm-damaged roofs in New Orleans. Yet the actual installers earn as little as $2 per square, and the tarps are provided by FEMA. Similarly, the Army Corps pays prime contractors about $20 per cubic yard of storm debris removed, yet some bulldozer operators receive only $1. Every level of the contracting food chain, in other words, is grotesquely overfed except the bottom rung, where the actual work is carried out. While the Friends of Bush mine gold from the wreckage of New Orleans, many disappointed recovery workers—often Mexican or Salvadoran immigrants camped out in city parks and derelict shopping centers—can barely make ends meet.

The Big Kiss-Off

In the fractious, take-no-prisoners world of Louisiana politics, broad solidarity of interest is normally as rare as a boulder in a bayou. Yet Katrina created an unprecedented bipartisan consensus around twin demands for Category 5 hurricane protection and mortgage relief for damaged homes. From conservative Republicans to liberal Democrats, there has been unanimity that the region's recovery depends on federal investment in new levees and coastal restoration, as well as financial rescue of the estimated 200,000 homeowners whose insurance coverage has failed to cover their actual damage. (There has been no equivalent consensus and little concern for the right of renters—who constituted 53 percent of the population before Katrina—and of public-housing tenants to return to their city.)

Yet by early November it was clear that saving New Orleans was no longer high on the Bush agenda, if it had ever been. As Congress headed toward its Christmas adjournment, the Louisiana delegation was in panic mode: A Category 5 plan had disappeared from serious discussion, and there were doubts about whether the damaged levees would be repaired before hurricane season returned. (In early March engineers monitoring the progress of the Army Corps's work complained that the use of weak, sandy soils and the lack of concrete "armoring" insured that the levees would again fail in a major storm.)

Congress ultimately voted to provide $29 billion for Gulf Coast relief. Yet as the *Washington Post* reported, "All but $6 billion of the measure merely reshuffled some of the $62 billion in previously approved Hurricane Katrina aid. The rest was funded by a 1 percent across-the-board cut of non-emergency, discretionary programs." The Pentagon won approval for a whopping $4.4 billion in base repairs and other professed Katrina-related needs, but Congress cut out the $250 million allocated to combat coastal erosion. Meanwhile, Mississippi's powerful Republican

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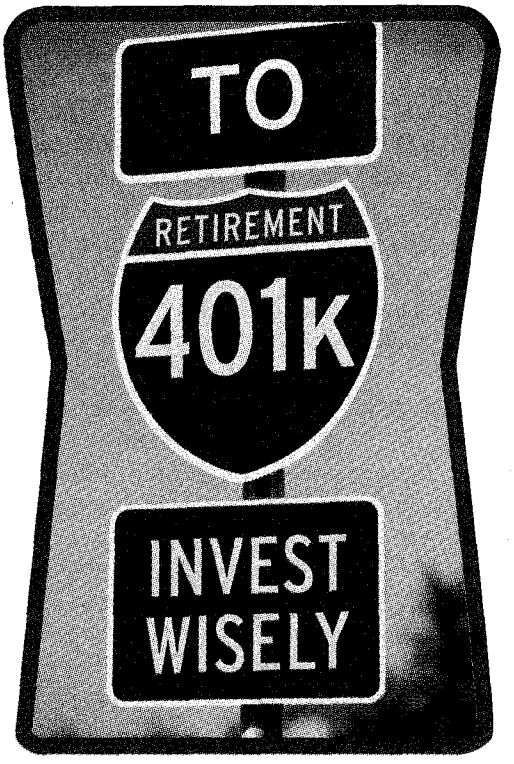

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troika—Governor Haley Barbour and Senators Trent Lott and Thad Cochran—persuaded fellow Republicans to support $6.2 billion in discretionary housing aid for Louisiana and $5.3 billion for Mississippi, with red-state Mississippi getting five times as much aid per distressed household as pink-state Louisiana.

Louisiana received another blow on January 23, when Bush rejected GOP Representative Richard Baker's plan calling for a federally guaranteed Louisiana Reconstruction Corporation, which would bail out homeowners by buying distressed properties and packaging them in larger parcels for resale to developers. Local Republicans as well as Democrats howled in rage, and the future of southern Louisiana was again thrown into chaos. Although the Administration eventually promised an additional $4.2 billion in housing aid, the appropriation continues to be fought over by Texas and other jealous states.

The Republican hostility to New Orleans, of course, runs deeper and is nastier than mere concern with civic probity (America's most corrupt city, after all, is located on the Potomac, not the Mississippi). Underlying all the circumlocutions are the same antediluvian prejudices and stereotypes that were used to justify the violent overthrow of Reconstruction 130 years ago. Usually it is the poor who are invisible in the aftermath of urban disasters, but in the case of New Orleans it has been the African-American professional middle class and skilled working class. In the confusion and suffering of Katrina—a Rorschach test of the American racial unconscious—most white politicians and media pundits have chosen to see only the demons of their prejudices. The city's complex history and social geography have been reduced to a cartoon of a vast slum inhabited by an alternately criminal or helpless underclass, whose salvation is the kindness of strangers in other, whiter cities. Inconvenient realities like Gentilly's red-brick normalcy—or, for that matter, the pride of homeownership and the exuberance of civic activism in the blue-collar Lower Ninth Ward—have not been allowed to interfere with the belief, embraced by New Democrats as well as old Republicans, that black urban culture is inherently pathological.

Such calumnies reproduce ancient caricatures—blacks running amok, incapable of honest self-government—that were evoked by the murderous White League when it plotted against Reconstruction in New Orleans in the 1870s. Indeed, some civil rights veterans fear that the 1874 Battle of Canal Street, a bloody League-organized insurrection against a Republican administration elected by black suffrage, is being refought—perhaps without pikes and guns, but with the same fundamental aim of dispossessing black New Orleans of economic and political power. Certainly, a sweeping transformation of the racial balance-of-power within the city has been on some people's agenda for a long time.

The Krewe of Canizaro

Power and status in New Orleans have always been defined by membership in secretive Mardi Gras "krewes" and social clubs. In the early 1990s civil rights activists, led by feisty Councilmember Dorothy Mae Taylor, forced the token desegregation of Mardi Gras, and some of the clubs reluctantly admitted a few African-American millionaires. Despite some old-guard holdouts, Uptown seemed to be adjusting, however grudgingly, to the reality of black political clout.

But as post-Katrina events have brutally clarified, if the oligarchy is dead, then long live the oligarchy. While elected black officials protest impotently from the sidelines, a largely white elite has wrested control over the debate about how to rebuild the city. This de facto ruling krewe includes Jim Amoss, editor of the New Orleans *Times-Picayune*; Pres Kabacoff, developer-gentrifier and local patron of the New Urbanism; Donald Bollinger, shipyard owner and prominent Bushite; James Reiss, real estate investor and chair of the Regional Transit Authority (i.e., the man responsible for the buses that didn't evacuate people); Alden McDonald Jr., CEO of one of the largest black-owned banks; Janet Howard of the Bureau of Government Research (originally established by Uptown elites to oppose the populism of Huey Long); and Scott Cowen, the aggressively ambitious president of Tulane University.

But the dominating figure and kingpin is Joseph Canizaro, a wealthy property developer who is a leading Bush supporter with close personal ties to the White House inner circle. He is also the power behind the throne of Mayor Nagin, a nominal Democrat (he supported Bush in 2000) who was elected in 2002 with 85 percent of the white vote. Finally, as the former president of the Urban Land Institute, Canizaro mobilizes the support of some of the nation's most powerful developers and prestigious master planners.

In a city where old money is often as reclusive as Anne Rice's vampires, Canizaro poses as a brave civic leader unafraid to speak bitter but necessary truths. As he told the Associated Press about the Katrina diaspora last October: "As a practical matter, these poor folks don't have the resources to go back to our city just like they didn't have the resources to get out of our city. So we won't get all those folks back. That's just a fact."

Indeed, it is a "fact" that Canizaro has helped shape into reigning dogma. The number of displaced residents returning to the city is obviously a highly variable function of the resources and opportunities provided for them, yet the rebuilding debate has been premised on suspicious projections—provided by the RAND Corporation and endlessly repeated by Nagin and Canizaro—that in three years the city would recover only half of its August 2005 population. Many Orleanians cynically wonder whether such projections aren't actually goals. For years Reiss, Kabacoff and others have complained that New Orleans has too many poor people. Faced with the dire fiscal consequences of white flight to the suburbs, as well as three decades of deindustrialization (which has given New Orleans an economic profile closer to Newark than to Houston or Atlanta), they argue that the city has become a soul-destroying warehouse for underemployed and poorly educated African-Americans, whose real interests—it is claimed—might be better served by a Greyhound ticket to another town.

Kabacoff's 2003 redevelopment of the St. Thomas public housing project as River Garden, a largely market-rate faux Creole subdivision, has become the prototype for the smaller, wealthier, whiter city that Mayor Nagin's Bring New Orleans Back commission (with Canizaro as head of the crucial urban planning committee) proposes to build. BNOB is perhaps the most important elite initiative in New Orleans since the famous "Cold Water Committee" (which included Kabacoff's father)

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Seth Tobocman, a comic-book artist, a political activist and one of the founders of the radical magazine World War Three Illustrated, *traveled to New Orleans this winter to volunteer with the Common Ground collective (models for drawings: Kennitta Lindsey and Louisa Krupp).*

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mobilized in 1946 to overthrow the "Old Regulars" and elect reformer deLesseps Morrison as mayor. BNOB grew out of a notorious meeting between Mayor Nagin and New Orleans business leaders (dubbed by some "the forty thieves") that Reiss organized in Dallas twelve days after Katrina devastated the city. The summit excluded most of New Orleans's elected black representatives and, according to Reiss as characterized in the *Wall Street Journal*, focused on the opportunity to rebuild the city "with better services and fewer poor people."

Fears that a municipal coup d'état was in progress were scarcely mollified when at the end of September the mayor charged BNOB with preparing a master plan to rebuild the city. Although the seventeen-member commission was racially balanced and included City Council president Oliver Thomas as well as jazz musician Wynton Marsalis (telecommuting from Manhattan), the real clout was exercised by committee chairs, especially Canizaro (urban planning), Cowen (education) and Howard (finance), who lunched privately with the mayor before the group's weekly meeting. This inner sanctum was reportedly necessary because the full-panel meetings did not allow a frank discussion of "tough issues of race and class."

The Crescent City's best-kept secret has been the resurgence of trade-union and community organizing since the mid-1990s.

BNOB might have quickly imploded but for a shrewd outflanking movement by Canizaro, who persuaded Nagin to invite the Urban Land Institute to work with the commission. Although the ULI is the self-interested national voice of corporate land developers, Nagin and Canizaro welcomed the delegation of developers, architects and ex-mayors as a heroic cavalry of expertise riding to the city's rescue. In a nutshell, the ULI's recommendations reframed the historic elite desire to shrink the city's socioeconomic footprint of black poverty (and black political power) as a crusade to reduce its physical footprint to contours commensurate with public safety and a fiscally viable urban infrastructure.

Upon these suspect premises, the outside "experts" (including representatives of some of the country's largest property firms and corporate architects) proposed an unprecedented triage of an American city, in which low-lying neighborhoods would be targeted for mass buyouts and future conversion into a greenbelt to protect New Orleans from flooding. As a visiting developer told BNOB: "Your housing is now a public resource. You can't think of it as private property anymore."

Keenly aware of inevitable popular resistance, the ULI also proposed a Crescent City Rebuilding Corporation, armed with eminent domain, that would bypass the City Council, as well as an oversight board with power over the city's finances. With control of New Orleans schools already usurped by the state, the ULI's proposed dictatorship of experts and elite appointees would effectively overthrow representative democracy and annul the right of local people to make decisions about their lives. For veterans of the 1960s civil rights movement, especially, it reeked of disenfranchisement pure and simple, a return to the paternalism of plantation days.

The City Council, supported by a surprising number of white homeowners and their representatives, angrily rejected the ULI plan. Mayor Nagin—truly a cat on a hot tin roof—danced anxiously back and forth between the two camps, disavowing abandonment of any area while at the same time warning that the city could not afford to service every neighborhood. But state and national officials, including HUD Secretary Alphonso Jackson, applauded the ULI scheme, as did the editorial page of the *Times-Picayune* and the influential Bureau of Government Research.

The BNOB recommendations presented by Canizaro in January faithfully hewed to the ULI framework: They included an appointed redevelopment corporation, outside the control of the City Council, that would act as a land bank to buy out heavily damaged homes and neighborhoods with federal funds, wielding eminent domain as needed to retire low-lying areas to greenbelt ("black people's neighborhoods into white people's parks," someone commented) or to assemble "in-fill" tracts for mixed-income development à la River Garden. Other committees recommended a radical diminution of the power of elected government.

On the crucial question of how to decide which neighborhoods would be allowed to rebuild and which would be bulldozed, BNOB endorsed the concept of forced buyouts but equivocated over process. Instead of the ruthless map that the Bureau of Government Research wanted, Canizaro and colleagues proposed a Rube Goldberg–like temporary building moratorium in tandem with neighborhood planning meetings that would poll homeowners about their intentions. Only those neighborhoods where at least half of the pre-Katrina residents had made a committment to return would be considered serious candidates for Community Development Block Grants (CDBGs) and other financial aid.

Canizaro presented the report to Nagin in front of a public audience on January 11. The mayor said, "I like the plan," and he complimented the commissioners for "a job well done." But most locals found little charm in the Canizaro report. "I will sit in my front door with my shotgun," one resident warned at a jammed meeting in the Council chambers on January 14, while another demanded, "Are we going to allow some developers, some hustlers, some land thieves to grab our land, grab our homes, to make this a Disney World version of our homes, our lives?" Predictably, Nagin panicked and eventually disavowed the building moratorium. Soon afterward the White House torpedoed the Baker plan and left BNOB with only the state-controlled CDBG appropriation to finance its ambitious vision of New Orleans regrouped around a dozen new River Gardens linked by a high-speed light-rail line.

But Canizaro doesn't seem unduly worried. He has reassured supporters that the ULI/BNOB plan can go forward with CDBGs alone if necessary; in addition, he knows that independent of the local political weather, there are powerful external forces—lack of insurance coverage, new FEMA flood maps, refusal of lenders to refinance mortgages and so on—that can make permanent the exodus from redlined neighborhoods. Moreover, as anyone versed in the realpolitik of modern Louisiana knows, nothing is finally decided in New Orleans until some good ol' boys (and girls) in Baton Rouge have their say.

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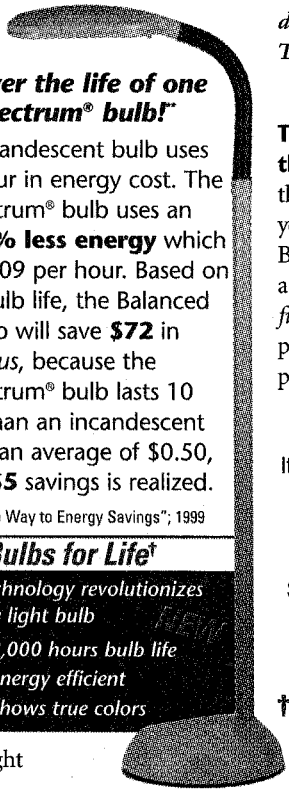

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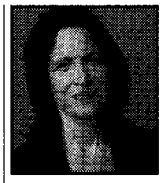

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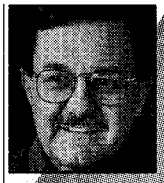

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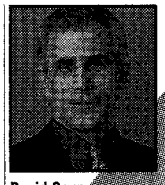

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Power Shift

Even before the last bloated body had been fished out of the fetid waters, conservative political analysts were writing gleeful obituaries for black Democratic power in Louisiana. "The Democrats' margin of victory," said Ronald Utt of the Heritage Foundation, is "living in the Astrodome in Houston." Thanks to the Army Corps's defective levees, the Republicans stand to gain another Senate seat, two Congressional seats and probably the governorship. The Democrats would also find it impossible to reproduce Bill Clinton's 1992 feat, when he carried Louisiana by almost exactly his margin of victory in New Orleans. With a ruthless psephologist like Karl Rove in the White House, it is inconceivable that such considerations haven't influenced the shameless Bush response to the city's distress.

New Orleans has always vied with Detroit when it comes to the violent antipathy of white-flight suburbs toward its black central city, so it is not surprising that representatives from Jefferson Parish (which elected Klan leader David Duke to the state legislature in 1989) and St. Tammany Parish have particularly relished the post-Katrina shift in metropolitan population and electoral power. Both parishes are in the midst of housing booms that may consolidate the hollowing out and decline of New Orleans.

For her part, Governor Blanco, a Democrat, has expressed little concern about this fundamental reconfiguration of Louisiana's major metropolitan area. Indeed, her immediate, Bush-like responses to Katrina were to help engineer a state takeover of New Orleans schools and to slash $500 million in state spending while sponsoring tax breaks (in the name of economic recovery) for oil companies awash in profits. The Legislative Black Caucus was outraged at Blanco's "complete lack of vision and leadership" and went to court to challenge her right to make cuts without consulting lawmakers. But Blanco, supported by rural conservatives and corporate lobbyists, remained intransigent, even openly hostile, to black Democrats whose support she had previously courted.

Poor people have no voice inside the Louisiana Recovery Authority, whose gaggle of university presidents and corporate types appointed by Blanco is even less beholden to black New Orleans voters and their representatives than the Canizaro krewe. The twenty-nine-member LRA board, dominated by representatives of big business, has only one trade unionist and not a single grassroots black representative. Moreover, in contrast to Nagin's commission, the LRA has the power to decide, not merely advise: It controls the allocation of the FEMA funds and CDBGs that Congress has provided for reconstruction.

According to interviews in the *Times-Picayune*, leading members of the LRA believe that the sheer force of economic disincentives will shrink the city around the contours proposed by the Urban Land Institute. The authority has thus refused to disburse any of its hazard mitigation funds to areas considered unsafe, and presumably will be equally hardheaded in the allocation of CDBG spending. At a special session of the legislature Governor Blanco emphasized that the state, not local government or neighborhood planning committees, will retain control over where grants and loans go.

But Blanco and the elites may have overlooked the Fats Domino factor.

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'No Bulldozing!'

Like hundreds of other flood-damaged but structurally sound homes, Fats Domino's house wears a defiant sign: SAVE OUR NEIGHBORHOOD: NO BULLDOZING! The r&b icon, who has always stayed close to his roots in working-class Holy Cross, knows his riverside neighborhood and the rest of the Lower Ninth Ward are prime targets of the city-shrinkers. Indeed, on Christmas Day the *Times-Picayune*—declaring that "before a community can rebuild, it must dream"—published a vision of what a smaller-but-better New Orleans might look like: "Tourists and schoolchildren tour a living museum that includes the former home of Fats Domino and Holy Cross High School, a multiblock memorial to Katrina that spans the devastated neighborhood."

"Living museum" (or "holocaust museum," as a black friend bitterly observed) sounds like a bad joke, but it is the elite view of what African-American New Orleans should become. In the brave New Urbanist world of Canizaro and Kabacoff, blacks (along with that other colorful minority group, Cajuns) will reign only as entertainers and self-caricatures. The high-voltage energy that once rocked juke joints, housing projects and second-line parades will now be safely embalmed for tourists in a proposed Louisiana Music Experience in the Central Business District.

But this minstrel-show version of the future must first defeat a remarkable local history of grassroots organization. The Crescent City's best-kept secret—in the mainstream press, at least—has been the resurgence of trade-union and community organizing since the mid-1990s. Indeed, New Orleans, the only Southern city in which labor was ever powerful enough to call a general strike, has become an important crucible of new social movements. In particular, it has become the home base of ACORN, a national organization of working-class homeowners and tenants that counts more than 9,000 New Orleans member-families, mostly in triage-threatened black neighborhoods. ACORN's membership has been the engine behind the tumultuous, decade-long struggle to unionize downtown hotels as well as the successful 2002 referendum to legislate the nation's first municipal minimum wage (later overthrown by a right-wing state Supreme Court). Since Katrina, ACORN has emerged as the major opponent of the ULI/BNOB plan for shrinking the city. Its members find themselves again fighting many of the same elite figures who were opponents of hotel unionization and a living wage.

ACORN founder Wade Rathke scoffs at the RAND Corporation projections that portray most blacks abandoning the city. "Don't believe those phony figures," he told me over beignets at Cafe du Monde in January. "We have polled our displaced members in Houston and Atlanta. Folks overwhelmingly want to return. But they realize that this is a tough struggle, since we have to fight simultaneously on two fronts: to restore people's homes and to bring back their jobs. It is also a race against time. The challenge is, You make it, you take it. So our members are voting with their feet."

Not waiting for CDBGs, FEMA flood maps or permission from Canizaro, ACORN crews and volunteers from across the country are working night and day to repair the homes of 1,000

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member-families in some of the most threatened areas. The strategy is to confront the city-shrinkers with the incontestable fact of reoccupied, viable neighborhood cores.

ACORN has allied with the AFL-CIO and the NAACP to defend worker rights and press for the hiring of locals in the recovery effort. Rathke points out that Katrina has become the pretext for the most vicious government-supported attack on unions since President Reagan fired striking air-traffic controllers in 1981. "First, suspension of Davis-Bacon [federal prevailing wage law], then the state takeover of the schools and the destruction of the teachers' union, and now this." He points to a beat-up green garbage truck rattling by Jackson Square. "Trash collection in the French Quarter used to be a unionized city job, SEIU members. Now FEMA has contracted the work to a scab company from out of state. Is this what Bring New Orleans Back means?"

ACORN also went to court to insure that New Orleans's displaced, largely black population would have access to out-of-state polling places, especially in Atlanta and Houston, for the scheduled April 22 city elections. When a federal judge rejected the demand, ACORN organizer Stephen Bradberry said it's "so obvious that there's a concerted plan to make this a whiter city." The NAACP agrees, but the Justice Department denied its request to block an election that is likely to transfer power to the artificial white majority created by Katrina.

It would be inspiring to see in this latest battle of New Orleans the birth pangs of a new or renewed civil rights movement, but gritty local activism has yet to be echoed in meaningful solidarity by the labor movement, so-called progressive Democrats or even the Congressional Black Caucus. Pledges, press statements and occasional delegations, yes; but not the unfaltering national outrage and sense of urgency that should attend the attempted murder of New Orleans on the fortieth anniversary of the Voting Rights Act. In 1874, as historian Ted Tunnell has pointed out, the failure of Northern Radicals to launch a militant, armed riposte to the white insurrection in New Orleans helped to doom the first Reconstruction. Will our feeble response to Hurricane Katrina now lead to the rollback of the second? ■

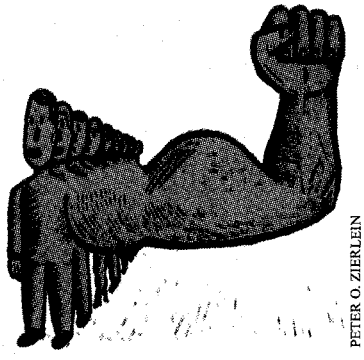
FRESH POLITICAL VOICES FOR A PUBLIC FED UP WITH NEOLIBERALISM AND WAR.

The Emerging New Euroleft

HILARY WAINWRIGHT

Manchester

From my desk in the north of England, the grass seems considerably greener—or the poppies redder—across the water in Europe. Here in Britain political look-alikes compete frenetically for the center ground, and politicians of the radical left are sidelined by a grossly disproportionate electoral system. In contrast, Norway's Left Socialist Party is part of the government; Italy's radical Partito della Rifondazione Comunista (Communist Refoundation Party, or PRC) is a key player in L'Unione, the coalition that could well defeat Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi in this April's elections; Germany's Linkspartei (Left Party) potentially provides a new voice on the left; France's historically fissiparous left united to give the EU constitution a resounding European "No!" Ripples from this defeat of an arrogant political elite are evident in the confident way that young people presume they can block Prime Minister Villepin's attempt to neoliberalize the French labor market.



PETER O. ZIERLEIN

It's not all onward and upward. In last year's Spanish elections the United Left lost all its seats in the Madrid Parliament, partly because it was insufficiently nimble in the face of the move left by José Luis Rodríguez Zapatero's victorious Socialist Party, lifted into office on a wave of antiwar opinion. The Swedish Left Party is in disarray, while in Greece the relatively innovative Synaspismos is numerically overshadowed by the dogmatic and sectarian Greek Communist Party. But the political landscape of Western Europe is changing as disillusion with neoliberal policies grows.

Parties coming from varying combinations of Communist, Trotskyist and independent green-left traditions have long acted as a magnet for popular disillusion with mainstream politics. But the constituency for an alternative to neoliberalism, whether Berlusconian or Blairite, is now far greater than any electoral support for the parties of the radical left. This constituency is reflected in opinion polls indicating majorities against both the Iraq War and privatization, in the popularity of muckraking films like *The Constant Gardener* and most of all in the continual eruption of resistance to governments pursuing neoliberal agendas, the French protests being the latest example.

Many of Europe's radical left parties are still struggling to develop new projects for social, economic and political change. Increasingly self-conscious about their own limitations, they are seeking to refound themselves by working with the radical social movements, organizations and networks that have gathered momentum in recent years. They face a Catch-22, however, because their efforts to innovate are in constant tension with the organizational imperatives of electoral politics. Yet without

Hilary Wainwright is editor of Red Pepper *(www.redpepper.org.uk) and research director of the New Politics Project of the Transitional Institute (www.tni.org). Her most recent book is* Reclaim the State: Experiments in Popular Democracy *(Verso).* *She thanks the Rosa Luxemburg Foundation.*

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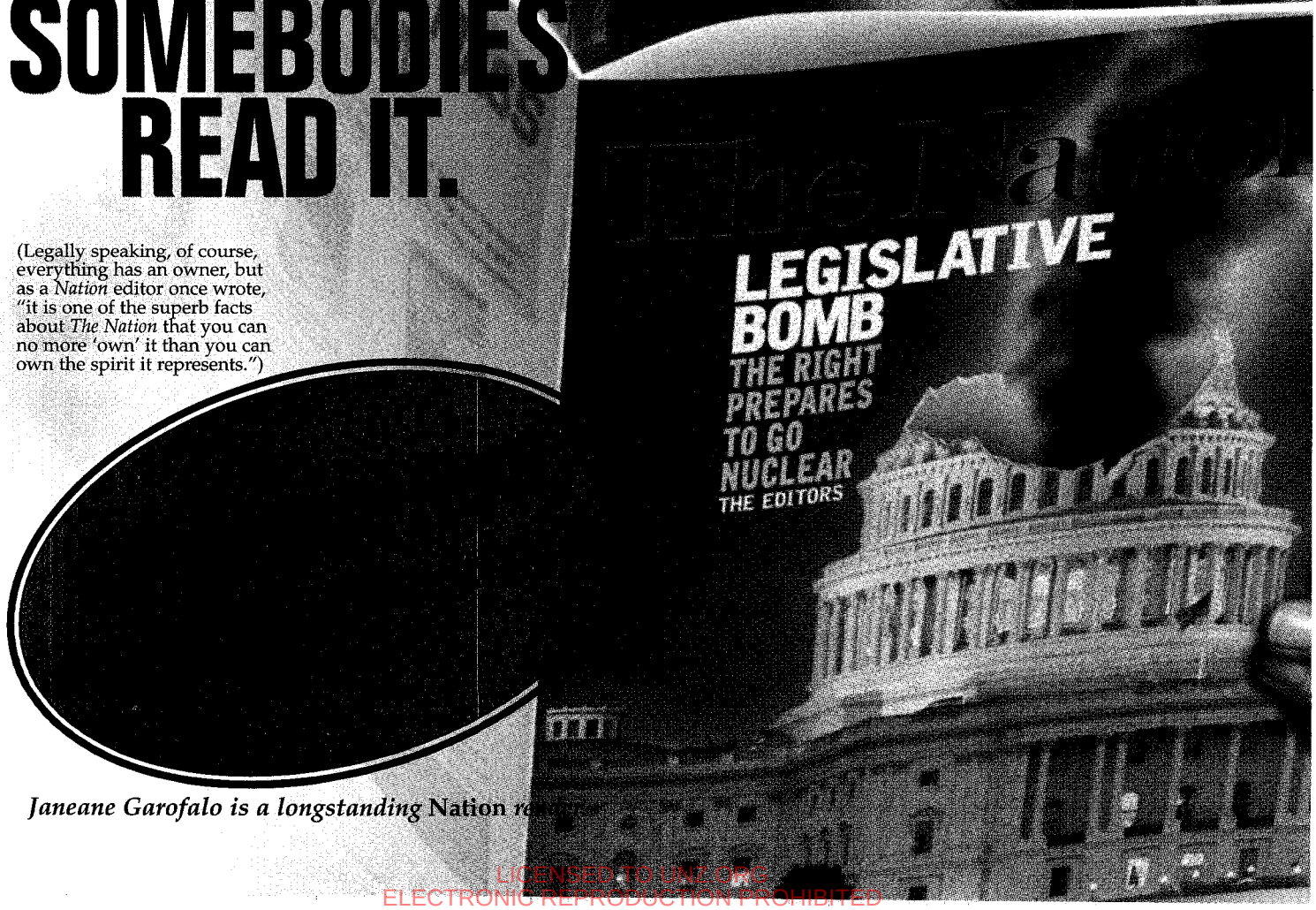
(Legally speaking, of course, everything has an owner, but as a *Nation* editor once wrote, "it is one of the superb facts about *The Nation* that you can no more 'own' it than you can own the spirit it represents.")



Janeane Garofalo is a longstanding Nation *re*

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a more fundamental renovation—including giving way to the creation of entirely new political projects—they will remain in the minority.

The most successful parties on the European left are those that have immersed themselves in social movements, especially the movements for global social justice, while at the same time using electoral footholds to open up political institutions. What is happening across Western Europe is that significant swaths of public opinion have far more radical expectations than social democratic parties can meet, but most of these voters are slow to shift party loyalties. Consequently, it is through radical movements independent of the political system, from antiwar groups to trade union and community alliances against privatization, that this opinion is gaining organized expression. As a result, left parties that have strong links with these movements are able to punch way beyond their electoral strength, making gains for political ideas that the movements and parties share. "Social movements are the engines of transformation," says Fausto Bertinotti, leader of Italy's Rifondazione and the Mediterranean maestro of this strategy for outflanking conservative political institutions. Political parties must recognize that they are "but one actor among many," he insists.

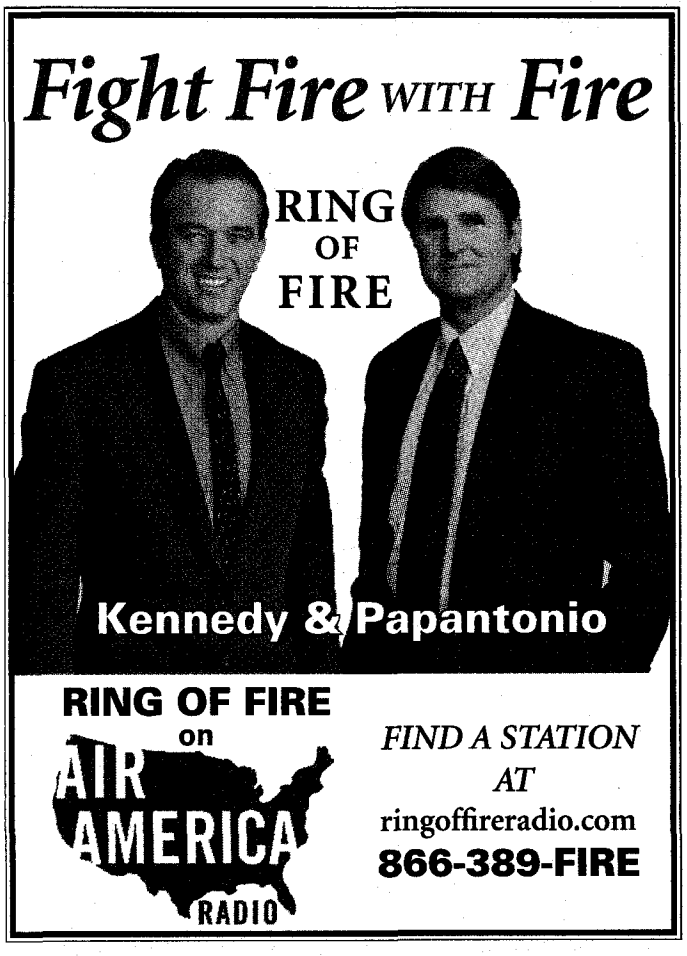
Norway, with its uniquely proportional electoral system, provides a laboratory for the radical left's experiment with a pluralist approach to power. (By "pluralist," I mean a break from the idea that the party has a monopoly on the process of social change, and recognition of a plurality of sources of transformative power.) "The changes we have achieved would have been impossible without the pressure and initiatives of the movements since Seattle," commented Dag Seierstad of the Norwegian Socialist Left Party (SV), which split from the Labor Party in 1961. The SV provides the best Northern European example of this dialectic between party and movement.

The SV's twin-track strategy of working with a global justice movement closely linked to trade unions and campaigning electorally for a coalition of leftist parties, including a reluctant Labor Party, first bore fruit in 2001. The electoral consequences were ambiguous: The SV won 12.5 percent of the vote and twenty-three seats in Parliament, while Labor crashed to 24.3 percent and forty-three seats and actually lost the election to the Conservatives. But Labor's electoral collapse led the unions to start pushing for a coalition with the SV, rather than the center-right. When the left coalition won in 2005, the SV—a party committed not only to defending public services and public ownership but also to withdrawal from NATO—actually found itself in government, even though its share of the vote had dropped significantly, to 9 percent and only fifteen seats. The SV's presence in Norway's governing coalition has already stopped in its tracks the outgoing Conservative government's deregulation and privatization program. The SV can also claim credit for the reallocation of Norway's oil surplus as development aid, the commitment to withdraw Norwegian troops from Iraq and the actual withdrawal of Norwegian special staff from NATO's Afghanistan operations.

The SV remains powerful because its presence provides a channel into government for movements that have their own social, economic and cultural strength. "Every day of the three-week-long negotiations, there were demonstrations outside that could be heard as we talked," says Seierstad. The demonstrators symbolized why the government must listen to the SV.

This is the kind of dynamic that the PRC is attempting to reproduce in Italy. It has had some successes at the local level, gaining both confidence and skill in this new kind of socialist politics. Isadora D'Aimmo, a PRC representative in the coalition government of the Left Democrats (DS) in Naples, describes how "the presence of Rifondazione forces the whole government to open the door to movements and to people's direct expression of their needs. Take a small but typical example: The regional government intended to build an incinerator in the town of Acerra. We disagreed and insisted on ecological ways of recycling waste. The people of Acerra revolted. They were supported by the mayor, who is a member of the PRC. It has been a revolt involving every citizen: men, women, boys, girls, priests. No incinerator has been built. That's how we work, with the movements to change the decisions of government and also the way they take those decisions." The parliamentary weight of the PRC on its own could never have achieved such changes in regional policy.

In the last national elections, the PRC won only 6 percent of the vote, but by opening the political process to popular participation it is trying to shift the balance of forces in favor of radical change. At the national level the aim therefore is not simply to form a united front against Berlusconi but also, through working relationships similar to those achieved locally, to keep constant pressure on any new government to break the



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logic of neoliberalism and find an alternative way out of Italy's deepening economic crisis.

An equal partnership with the movements becomes a necessary condition for radical social change. "We want to be a resource for the movements without trying to dominate them. It involves giving up on the sovereignty of the party," says Nicola Fratoianni, regional secretary of the party in Puglia, Southern Italy, where the PRC's gay Catholic Communist candidate won election as regional governor last April through a campaign whose momentum depended on the creativity and energy of local gay, youth and other social movements.

The European Left Party (EL) was founded two years ago to bring together leftist parties across Europe. So far it is still a loose federation rather than a united political grouping, but it has been a catalyst in the chemistry of the reviving European left. "We learned a lot from the Italians," says Christiane Reymann, a feminist in the leadership of the German Party of Democratic Socialists (PDS), now the dominant partner in the Linkspartei. "Their influence was vital to setting up the Linskpartei." Members of the French Communist Party (PCF) express similar enthusiasm for the EL: "The support of our partners in the EL was crucial to the success of the European 'No,'" says Elisabeth Gautier of Espaces Marx, a think tank associated with the PCF.

In both France and Germany, however, the dynamic between movement and party is less about government and more about strategies for survival. With its share of the vote down to 3.2 percent in 2002, the PCF risked extinction. For those in the PCF whose goal was to change society in their own lifetimes rather than maintain a dying political machine, the only hope was to put their remaining resources at the disposal of those movements resisting France's version of neoliberalism. The innovators inside the party threw themselves into the campaign against the EU Constitution, where a strong grassroots movement joined them with even such traditional enemies as the Trotskyist Revolutionary Communist League. But the momentum of last year's referendum victory will not be enough to overcome the deeply rooted sectarianism already re-emerging as the minds of the party loyalists turn to the presidential elections of 2007. Both left parties are reluctant to sacrifice the main opportunity on the French political calendar to promote their brand image in favor of a common candidate for the whole of the "alternative left." But the latest mass resistance is already breathing stronger life into the coalitions of the left, which were formed under different names across France during the fight for a European "No."

In France (and Germany too) the conservative institutions that movement activists, including many party members, have to outflank are those of the parties of the left. In Germany the crisis of politics following unification has presented the anti-globalization movement and the anti-neoliberal trade unions with a political opportunity for a radical political voice but also with a tough challenge. The Linkspartei is to some extent a very precarious marriage of convenience: The PDS, though popular in the east, faced a slow death as long as it remained in its eastern ghetto lacking any representation in the Bundestag. Meanwhile, in the western part of the country, a significant

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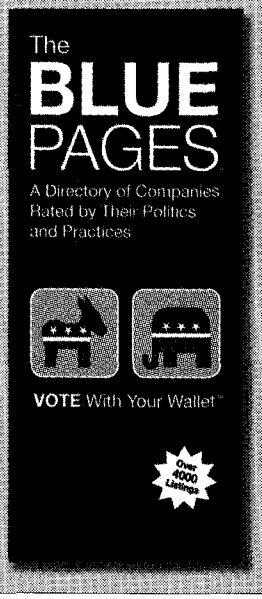

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group of regional trade union leaders and engaged intellectuals led by former economics minister Oskar Lafontaine split from the Social Democratic Party to form the Election Alternative for Employment and Social Justice. They came together initially as an electoral alliance and surprised themselves by winning 8.7 percent of the vote and fifty-four seats in the Bundestag in last year's elections.

The leaders of the Linkspartei talk the talk of working with the movements, but I doubt if many of their leaders would really accept the proposition that they are just "one actor among many." There is, however, a significant minority who have been genuinely influenced by their involvement in the new movements, including the networks that are spreading through the European Social Forum. They complain of the overly "managerial" approach of the party leadership, who patronize the movements and curb open discussion and autonomous initiatives inside the party.

The strategy of opening parties and political institutions to social movements seeks to release new and powerful forces for political change. Three current trends support it: First, the continuing, though fragmented, resistance to various aspects of neoliberalism, whether privatization, deregulation, bureaucratically imposed development plans or war. Second, the failure of sclerotic and often corrupt political institutions to represent or debate this widespread popular feeling adequately. Third, the European context itself, which produces a rich cross-fertilization of ideas and political cultures. Who knows, someday it might even shake the institutions of the British establishment. Indeed, with the Scottish Socialist Party now eight years old—with six seats in the Scottish Parliament and strong roots in Scotland's radical movements—the politics of pluralist transformation already has a foothold even here in Britain. ■

COMMENT

(Continued From Page 8)

the 1967 annexation of this part of the city, and to consolidate further the 184,000 settlers living there. In this way the government will not have to evacuate 87 percent of the settlers now living in the West Bank, and Jews will have a clear majority within Israel's unilaterally determined borders. The price Israel will have to pay for such a solution is the evacuation of 52,000 settlers.

Geographically, however, the barrier qua political border (including Israel's plan to maintain control of the Jordan Valley) does not resemble either of the traditional visions for peace: the two-state solution or the binational polity.

An examination of the barrier's route reveals that the future Palestinian "state" will be divided into three, if not five, areas (including Gaza). Each area will be closed off almost entirely from the others, while Israel will effectively continue to control all the borders so as to enforce a hermetic closure whenever it wishes. What is new about Kadima's vision is not the attempt to create isolated enclaves in the occupied territories but rather the effort to transform these into quasi-independent entities that will ostensibly constitute a Palestinian state.

The brilliance of Kadima's political plan is that it solves Israel's demographic problem and presents its solution as the two-state option, while eliding the fact that Israel will continue to control the Palestinians, whose living conditions will be even further limited in terms of resources, mobility and decision-making. The methods of control, though, will have to be more remote and technologically sophisticated, using biometrics, video cameras, robots and surveillance aircraft.

The Palestinians, in turn, will no doubt employ all means at their disposal to resist Israel's attempt to transform the West Bank and Gaza into remotely controlled bantustans. Consequently, one should not be surprised if Olmert's plan is met by more of the intifada's Qassam rockets, this time launched not just from Gaza but from the West Bank toward Jerusalem and Tel Aviv.

The ultimate irony is that Kadima's political vision actually puts the peace process into reverse. On the one hand, it is trying to persuade the public that it can make the Palestinian problem disappear by reintroducing the age-old Zionist trope of an "iron wall." On the other hand, it has abandoned all forms of dialogue and negotiation, which Israeli leaders since the early 1990s understood to be the only way to reach a solution with the Palestinians. Kadima is accordingly an oxymoron. While the party's name means "forward," its political program will effectively take Israelis several steps backward. NEVE GORDON

Neve Gordon teaches politics at Ben-Gurion University in Israel.

LETTERS
CONTINUED

(Continued From Page 2)

Los Angeles

■ "A New Black Power" blew me away. I was sitting at my UCLA desk job reading it when my boss walked in. What was I reading? he wondered. My heart was burning. I wanted to tell him that I'm reading about empowerment. I am reading about the YOUTH—me, sir, I wanted to say. This little girl who gets your mail. I am sitting here reading about how I need to stand up for humanity. Yes, Mosley addressed black Americans, but he was speaking to me too! I mean, what about me? What about Armenian-Americans, or Azerbaijani-Americans, Iraqi-Americans? What about the rest of us, who are not represented by any "party"? Mosley says to the young people, "You have to take the reins." I AM READY TO TAKE THE REINS, but I don't know how. What do I do? Where do I turn? I have my fists clenched, my eyes focused, my heart on fire and I can't wait to be shown how to do something about the atrocities committed in my name! LUSINE KHACHATRYAN

JFK CODA

Pennington, NJ

■ Regarding Max Holland's reply to my letter [March 20], an honorable person would have felt obliged to prove such a serious allegation rather than simply assert an unsupported and vicious conclusion, preceded by a couple of typographical errors. In the absence of such proof, I demand a retraction. JOAN MELLEN

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BOOKS & THE ARTS

Brother From Another Planet

RUSSELL JACOBY

THE DISAPPEARING LIBERAL INTELLECTUAL.
By Eric Lott.
Basic. 260 pp. $26.

If you missed the 1995 CUNY "Question of Identity" conference, the issue of *October* magazine devoted to it, the "remarkable" essay on the same subject in *Diacritics* or—even worse—you are unaware you have missed these, don't despair. Help is on the way. Eric Lott, who teaches English and American studies at the University of Virginia, will bring you up to speed. His book *The Disappearing Liberal Intellectual* is to stay-at-home tenured radicals what the television remote is to couch potatoes. Without parking hassles or library bottlenecks, you get the latest on unforgettable conferences and pathbreaking journal articles. Did you know, for instance, that Gene Wise's "famous" essay "Paradigm Dramas in American Studies" was "intriguingly revised" in Pease and Wiegman's anthology *The Future of American Studies*? No? For only twenty-six bucks, you can find out about this and more.

To be sure, Lott seeks more than to guide would-be tenured radicals; he has a mission and an animus. He wants to carve out a space for radicals to the left of detestable "boomer liberals," who have seized the limelight and distorted politics. They constitute "one of the chief obstacles" to a revitalized politics. In fact, Lott's title misleads, and either of his earlier working titles, *Boomer Liberalism* or *The Lost Intellectuals*, might have been more accurate. These boomers are the opposite of "disappearing" liberals. They are omnipresent. Who are they? Lott names "a few of the most celebrated of these thinkers": Todd Gitlin, Michael Lind, Joe Klein, Martha Nussbaum, Paul Berman, Stanley Crouch, Greil Marcus, Sean Wilentz and Henry Louis Gates Jr.

For Lott this "new liberal front" oozes with a "piecemeal, reformist self-satisfaction." The new reformers represent a "bone headed degeneration of the radical spirit." They have "created the political fog that obscured the left from view" and buried the "liberal alternative to hawkish conservatism." These liberals pander to state power and American nationalism. They yearn for the "old-boys' left" that was largely white and that claimed to be universal. Their work is "anti-corporate" rather than anticapitalist. (Disclosure alert: Along with Mark Crispin Miller and Thomas Frank, I am listed as suffering from this particular ailment.) They turn politics into adjuncts of the John Kerry presidential bid. They are a "secret sharer of neoconservative ideology," and they legitimate the Bush White House and its politics. They constitute an intellectual and political "disaster."

Tired of 'boomer liberalism'? Hungry for an 'antinormative,' insurgent alternative? Look no further: This manifesto is for you.

Lott, on the other hand, writes from a "radical egalitarian perspective" that celebrates "upsurge from below." Instead of liberal wishy-washiness about class and economic inequality, he squarely calls for a "full engagement with working-class hopes" that "necessarily involves a long march through the history of African-American liberation movements, radical women's uprisings, and other insurrectionary energies." The boomer liberals do not understand how "successful activist movements" of "blacks, Latinos, women, queers, and others have transformed" politics. With a self-professed "irony" and polemical zeal, Lott blasts old New Leftists in order to invigorate a new radical politics.

Russell Jacoby, a professor of history at UCLA, is the author of The Last Intellectuals, Dialectic of Defeat *and other works. His most recent book is* Picture Imperfect: Utopian Thought for an Anti-Utopian Age *(Columbia).*

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In an era of pallid Democrats and furtive leftists, Lott comes out shouting his revolutionary loyalties. He marches with real working people. So far, so good. Unfortunately, he marches only from the podium to the speaker's table. Sometimes he gets to the library or logs on to hiptheory.com to check out what Étienne Balibar, a French post-Marxist, has written. His radical commitments amount to promoting leftist colleagues in American studies departments and a few European Marxists. Moreover, he wildly inflates the impact of the "liberal front" he is supposedly challenging. With Lott as your guide, you'd think Todd Gitlin and Paul Berman sabotaged the left and ushered in Bush. Were it so simple.

Throughout this tract Lott charges boomer liberals with reformist politics and theoretical simplicity. Even if one grants these points, what does he offer to replace them? He claims the high political ground, but he cannot formulate a single coherent sentence about politics as seen from there. He tosses off phrases about "intersectionality" and "the praxis potential of antinormativity," but politics hardly enters this political book. One might suppose that in the midst of the war in Iraq Lott would take on its liberal supporters, such as Berman, but he never raises the issue. He feels more comfortable flaying Berman for dismissing the Black Panthers and for pining for a '60s before the women and gay "insurgencies challenged the white male hegemony of the baby-boom left." He prefers gabbing about how soft leftists have misinterpreted Clinton or African-American music to explaining how tough-as-nails radicals like him see the world today.

African-American life and culture are actually specialties of Lott; in these areas he deserves an honorary degree in one-upmanship. No one quite gets black culture like Lott. Not only do white boomers like Gitlin and Berman unacceptably depreciate the black movement; so do some black writers. White-guy Lott admonishes Cornel West for "his low estimation of black cultural life." West cannot fathom the genius of ex–Geto Boy Willie D.'s rap single "Fuck Rodney King." West hears nihilism, but Lott registers "rigorous" political thinking and an aesthetic "worthy" of Rimbaud, an aesthetic, he gratuitously adds, "so superbly analyzed in Kristin Ross's *The Emergence of Social Space*." It gets worse. West is losing touch with black youth. "West can't mention black kids," Brother Lott tells us from the grassy 'hood at the University of Virginia, "without disclosing his sense of distance from them."

There is nothing wrong—indeed, there is everything right—with English professors like Lott appraising, criticizing and savaging the work of other professors and writers, but there is everything wrong about doing it in the name of a righteous revolution that consists of unreadable articles in *New Literary History*. Lott serves trays of holier-than-thou academic leftism with extra helpings of causes and clotted language. To revive an old label, Lott's work smacks of "infantile leftism," but when Lenin used the term he was referring to new political parties, not professorial posturing.

Consider Lott's criticism of Mark Crispin Miller's *The Bush Dyslexicon*, a collection and analysis of Bush's malapropisms. Miller's critique of Bush is apparently limited by his "own boomer investments" and his simple-minded theory of propaganda. "You don't have to be a media specialist," sniffs Professor Lott, "to recognize how crusty this apparatus seems in an age of post-Althusserian, post-poststructuralist, and post-Lacanian cultural studies." Imagine that! Miller does not refer to post-post-structuralism or post-Lacanian cultural studies! Where has he been? Unfortunately, our miffed tenured radical cannot explain what his high-octane theory illuminates. Propaganda suggests simple deception of the public. "By contrast, trying to read public imaginary identifications with the president assumes a positive content to our subsumption by the state." Like what or how? Lott runs on about Bush and Clinton but cannot figure it out. "It is Miller's 'propaganda,' for example, that allows him to misrecognize his own ideological proclivities enough to write off George W. as *impervious* to the 60's." Blah, blah, blah.

Or consider Lott's criticism of *The Twilight of Common Dreams*, in which Gitlin questions the rise of separate "identity" politics. Gitlin does not understand that the "new social movements" have "transformed the idea of the left itself." How so? Lott explains:

> As Ernesto Laclau and Chantal Mouffe argue in *Hegemony and Socialist Strategy*, the new social movements are rarely laterally compatible in any kind of united-front way, and in fact they call into question the idea that such a front won't wind up suppressing or misrepresenting certain of the interests grouped under its umbrella: this is Gitlin's own mistake, particularly in regard to black struggles.

To this concise statement Lott adds: "To me it is revealing that Gitlin refuses even to consider the most widely debated theorists of particularistic social urgency." To me it is revealing that Lott refuses even to mention any of these most widely debated theorists of "particularistic social urgency," whatever that means. Instead, he moves on to his favorite stomping ground, a 1996 conference that featured an especially "volatile" panel.

A hundred pages later, however, Lott rolls up his sleeves and tells us about these widely debated theorists and their purchase on reality. First place belongs to Laclau, an Argentine post-Marxist theorist who teaches in England. While Gitlin and other old fogies yearn for a universal left, Laclau provides the essential key as to how to push ahead. Oh, no! In a bad piece of luck, just as Lott turns to Laclau, the bell rings and he is forced to close with a few hasty remarks. "I haven't the space to lay out the intricate conceptual elegance of Laclau's discussion," apologizes Lott, so he quickly summarizes:

> Its most important move is to argue that the only acceptable political notion of the universal—and therefore of the organizational imperative—is that of the empty signifier, not a present, given, or essential fullness waiting for troops but an impossible ideal whose very emptiness and lack create a pluralized, difference-based competition on the part of various particularisms in a democratic social-symbolic field to assume the position of the universal organization.

Professor Lott! Professor Lott! Will that be on the exam? Will you go over it next class? Is that a translation? Can you explain it in English next time?

To the sellout liberal boomers with their dunderhead politics and ideas, Lott juxtaposes a bevy of postmodern thinkers with cutting-edge politics and ideas. Unfortunately, time again runs out, and Lott can only list his heavy hitters. Professor Lott's List of Top Radical Writings begins—hold your hat—this way:

> Walter Benn Michaels's neopragmatist critiques of identity, Paul Gilroy's elaboration of a diasporic "black Atlantic," Lisa Lowe's postnationalist deconstruction of U.S. reliance on and political exclusion of Asian labor, Lauren Berlant's explorations of antinormative citizenship, the exchanges between Judith Butler and Nancy Fraser on the relations between queer recognition and economic redistribution, Robyn Wiegman's attention to the institutional half-life of women's studies and the limitations of so-called whiteness studies, Lisa Duggan's attempts to suggest alternative discourses to redescribe the state....

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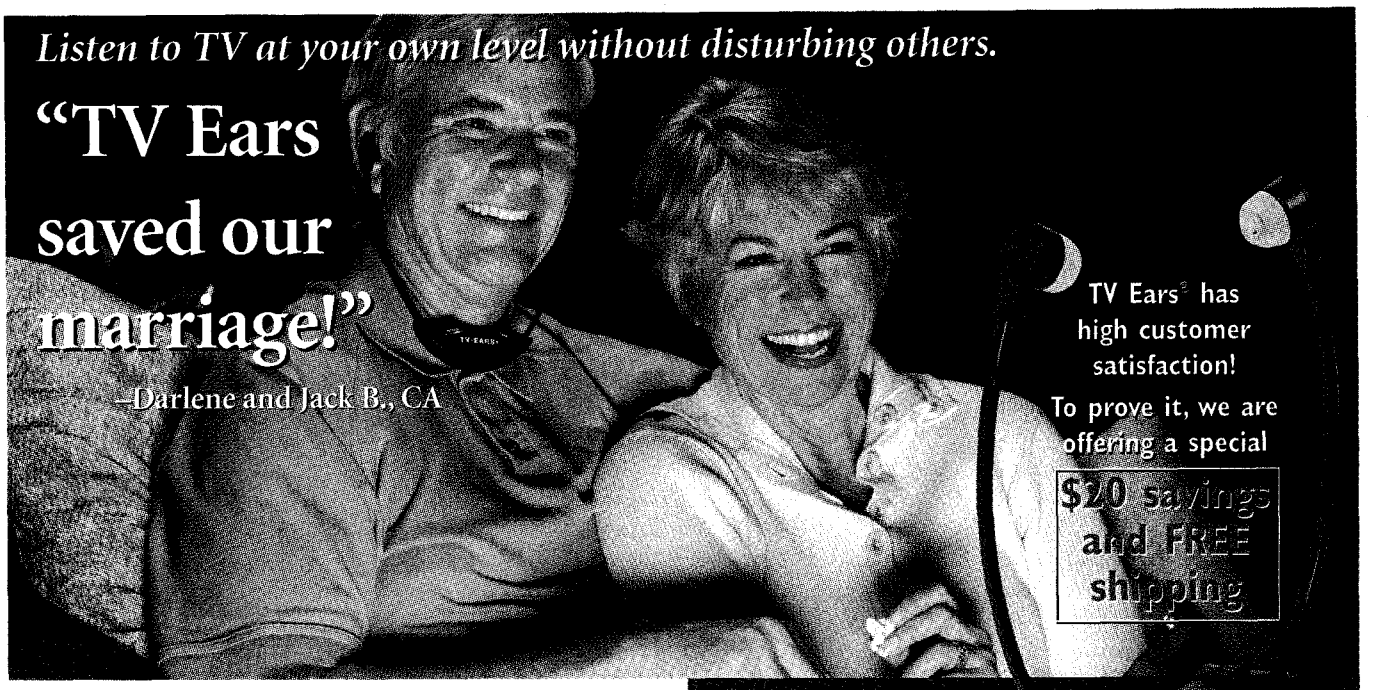

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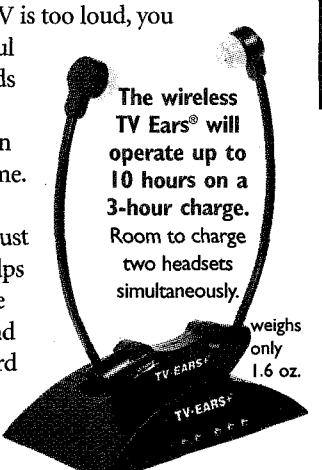

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Even hardened academics would break into a sweat just reading the list or identifying many of Lott's heroes. One figure is familiar: Lott. He puts his own work on the A-list, but it is dangerous at the top. He laments that an especially close-minded critic not only challenges one of Judith Butler's "most powerful pieces"—what insolence!—but "impugns an early version" of Lott's own "critique of boomer liberalism." More insolence! In any event, for Lott the writings of these academic stars or would-be stars constitute "a contemporary *political* response" to the current impasse.

Political? Where is the politics? Oh, no! The bell rings. Class is over.

Even the narcissistic Professor Lott must have dimly recognized that he set himself up for an easy tripping. After trashing left-liberals for their insipid politics, and after serving supersized helpings of academic jargon, the book closes with a typically opaque sentence: "Let us be for the freedom of transnations." Lott sensed a skeptic might ask, What does fearless Lott do besides blather? To defend his flanks he appends to the text a touching autobiographical epilogue of Eric Lott Revolutionary. It seems that almost ten years ago the underpaid service workers and their supporters at the University of Virginia organized a Labor Action Group to push for better wages. The university stonewalled, and Lott and the Labor Action Group organized a protest march. The day? Parents' weekend of the fall convocation. The plan? March to "the Lawn," where the convocation ceremony was being held.

Get the picture? After 200 pages of hyping antinormative intersectionality and dismissing boomer liberals for their reform politics, Lott steps out of his classroom to support service workers who seek several bucks more an hour—living wages, plain and simple. Good for him, but nothing here about subversive egalitarianism. Not a word about postidentity politics. No damning of liberal allies. Nothing about the black struggle. No talk of an empty signifier.

Lott approaches the Lawn as if it were the Tsar's Winter Palace and he Lenin in the October Revolution. Lott and his allies, 150 strong, brush past the mounted police. "Juiced," they rush the maw of state power: the Lawn. "We were not stopped.... As we took to the Lawn.... We were a movement now, and we couldn't lose." Their march lasts all of five minutes—but Lott has lost interest, and tells us nothing more. Presumably another conference beckons. So closes *The Disappearing Liberal Intellectual*, an almost flawless exemplar of tenured vacuity and mock radicalism. ■

Strangers in the Land

COREY ROBIN

HUMAN CARGO: A Journey Among Refugees.
By Caroline Moorehead. Picador. 397 pp. Paper $16.

THE RIGHTS OF OTHERS: Aliens, Residents, and Citizens.
By Seyla Benhabib. Cambridge. 251 pp. $24.

Nathan Berzok, son of Joseph and Mollie, was born in Odessa on October 7, 1905. A multicultural metropolis on the Black Sea, Odessa was home to some 138,000 Jews—and the site, eleven days after Nathan's birth, of a four-day pogrom that took at least 400 of their lives. The Berzoks survived; Mollie hid Nathan in a stove. But like many of Odessa's Jews, they took the pogrom as a sign that it was time to pack their bags. On March 1, 1908, Nathan, his two older brothers and Mollie arrived at Ellis Island. Joseph was there waiting for them, having already left Odessa to scout out New York. When he spied his wife and three sons inside the immigration center, Joseph rolled them oranges under the railing—the sweetest of signs that they had permanently left Odessa and its pogroms behind.

Nathan Berzok was my grandfather. But it wasn't until I had nearly finished *Human Cargo*, Caroline Moorehead's book about contemporary refugees and migrants, that I even thought of these stories, which he told me while I was growing up. I hadn't forgotten them. They just didn't register as I read Moorehead's harrowing tales of people fleeing persecution, warfare and destitution, traveling thousands of miles in search of a new and better life.

Despite the efforts of postmodern theorists to convince us that exile is the emblematic condition of modern life, when it comes to immigrants and refugees we still seem incapable of the barest gesture of recognition, much less empathy. We remember Oedipus Rex: lover of one parent, killer of another. We forget Oedipus at Colonus: exiled king who wandered twenty years in search of "a resting place" near Athens, "where I should find home" and "round out there my bitter life." We feel Medea's rage over Jason's betrayal, driving her to kill their two sons. We scarcely notice her equally poignant—and more frequent—lament that she is "deserted, a refugee," with "no harbor from ruin to reach easily."

Even those of us who for reasons of personal background, religion or politics should be most sensitive to the suffering of refugees can be astonishingly indifferent to their plight. "Four hundred years of bondage in Egypt," Cynthia Ozick has written, "rendered as metaphoric memory, can be spoken in a moment; in a single sentence. What this sentence is, we know; we have built every idea of moral civilization on it. It is a sentence that conceivably sums up at the start every revelation that came afterward.... 'The stranger that sojourneth with you shall be unto you as the home-born among you, and you shall love him as yourself; because you were strangers in the land of Egypt.'"

Fine, even beautiful, words, both the original and the gloss. But where are we to find them in Israel's treatment of the Palestinians, from the exile it thrust upon them in 1948 to the ongoing hostility to their return—or, for that matter, in Ozick's anti-Arab fulminations? From one vantage, the story of Israel and Palestine can seem the most idiosyncratic of ironies: A people forced to wander thousands of years forces another people to wander for who knows how many years. From another vantage, the story is sadly universal: the refusal to see or imagine oneself in the pain of another, even—or particularly—when one has suffered a similar ordeal. If exile has any larger import, then, it is not that we all share in its status. It is that it occasions the most sacred and sublime of obligations—"love him as yourself"—and the most wretched of betrayals.

Consider two points often made in debates about refugees and immigrants.

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Writers and politicians, in this country and in Western Europe, have long complained that immigrants and refugees do not conform to the rules and norms of liberal democracy. Arabs and Africans, we are often informed, do not accept the rights of women; Muslims are more loyal to their religion than to the state (something said of Europe's Jews not so long ago); immigrants carry, along with their luggage and food, the conflicts and violence of their countries of origin to their new homes. Since 9/11 writers and politicians have grown increasingly apprehensive about the security threat posed by Muslims and Arabs. Worried about insufficient assimilation and potential terrorism, many commentators now believe that Western countries need to reconsider their open immigration policies.

What's most interesting about these claims is not their truth or falsity but the terms of the debate, in which even the most right-minded men and women feel free to toss off one or two adjectives as a complete account of an entire people. When a Dutch vegan murdered the gay right-wing politician Pim Fortuyn, the distinction between a criminal and his dietary tastes remained sharp. But when Mohammed Bouyeri, a Muslim with dual citizenship in the Netherlands and Morocco, murdered Dutch filmmaker Theo van Gogh, a leap was instantly made from a lone assassin to an entire religion and region. Debates about immigration not only turn newcomers into outlaws; they also transform native-born citizens into a church of unsullied virtue. Start an argument in France about Muslim women wearing the hijab, and suddenly every Frenchman is a feminist.

What is it about immigrants and refugees that frees us from the stricture against guilt by association and the duty to treat individuals as individuals? Perhaps it is simply because we can. It is in the nature of immigration regimes, after all, to classify each arrival or departure as an instance of a larger whole. And because the immigrant's entry into or exit from a society is a question of choice—sometimes his or hers, always ours—there's a tendency on the part of host countries to assume that vexing social issues can be resolved merely by removing a distasteful ingredient from the mix.

It would be a mistake, however, to view the immigrant—or the exile or refugee—as simply a symbol of our fallen humanity, forever standing outside the gates of time, accusing us of hypocrisy and disregard. Exiles, refugees and immigrants are the subjects and objects of history and politics: in their countries of origin and destination, in the economies that push and pull them, in the global conflicts between contending state powers. And it is Moorehead's sensitivity to these historical circumstances and political contingencies—not to mention her considerable skills as a writer and storyteller—that makes her book such a vital contribution to debates over migration.

Writers in the West have long complained that immigrants and refugees do not conform to the rules and norms of liberal democracy.

Moorehead is a British writer who has been reporting on human rights since the early 1980s. Working in an already crowded genre, she differs from those showy journalists of alarm who view the distress of others as an opportunity for overwrought prose and self-display. Though a vital presence on the page—indeed, we occasionally see her intervening in the lives of the refugees she profiles—she is devoted to the quiet narration of disquieting fact. Each of Moorehead's chapters focuses on a different set of migrants trying to make their way across a different border. Wherever they are—in Sicily, northern Britain, Finland, Tijuana, Australia, southern Lebanon, Cairo or Guinea—she is with them. If her brief is universal, her eye and ear are local, attuned and affixed to the toll of state policies and their historical context. Inevitably, she brings to mind the great Martha Gellhorn, the subject of her last biography, whose "small, still voice" carried a "barely contained fury and indignation at the injustice of fate and man against the poor, the weak, the dispossessed."

In the past century, Moorehead argues, no historical force has had more immediate effect on immigration politics than the cold war. Throughout that conflict, exiles and refugees were treated as political gold, especially in the West. Eager to expose the tyranny of the Soviet Union and its allies, the anti-Communist powers spearheaded international conventions and institutions that firmly established the refugee as a victim of repression, unable to go back to her native land because of "a well-founded fear of persecution." The persecutors were presumed to be "totalitarian Communist regimes, and the refugees were therefore, by definition, 'good.'" Whether Soviet scientists or Vietnamese boat people, refugees were happily received by the United States, Western Europe and other countries. Indeed, during the 1970s, some 2 million people from Indochina found a home in the West. (Though the United States, it should be pointed out, never rolled out the red carpet to the victims of its interventions in Central America.)

With the end of the cold war, millions of people living under former Communist rule could move more freely, whether out of fear of repression and civil war or in the hope of economic opportunity. Mass migration, free and forced, has always been a central element of capitalism, from the Europeans who colonized the Americas in the seventeenth century to the Indians who settled in Africa in the nineteenth. Once the Communist world succumbed to the free market, that economic migration accelerated—though not, Moorehead writes, as much as we might think. "Most people today, as in the past, are not mobile. Somewhere between 2 and 3 percent of the world's population can be counted as international migrants...the proportion is no higher and no lower than at any time in the last fifty years." Still, the promise of economic betterment—and the need for cheap labor—remains a potent lure, reinforced by the threat or reality of persecution and violence in the Third World.

Released from the constraints of the cold war, prosperous nations have devised more elaborate measures to control, limit and regulate this movement of peoples. (Ironically, for all the recent talk of global flows, the cold war may have paved wider lanes of traffic.) Racism and xenophobia are, of course, permanent fixtures of immigration politics, albeit in varying degrees of intensity. But the end of the cold war allowed Western governments to indulge an image of the refugee as an economic and cultural parasite—crawling across or burrowing beneath the border in order to sap the nation's affluence and identity. September 11 and the "war on terror" have only hardened this impulse. "The whole notion of security, once seen as a matter of keeping refugees safe...has shifted. Now it is the refugees themselves who are seen to pose the danger."

Australia has been the leader of this trend, as Moorehead shows, establishing "one of the most exclusionary immigration policies of any democracy" in the world. Where most countries sell their beaches, nightlife or mountains to potential tourists, the Australian government has distributed a video depicting an island continent "inhabited by poisonous snakes, fearsome crocodiles, and man-

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eating sharks." In 2001 the government instituted "the Pacific Solution," in which trespassers would be intercepted at sea and deposited in Indonesia or transferred to "off-shore processing centers." Under no circumstances would they be allowed on Australian soil and thereby gain access to the courts. Deprived of all hope—and traditional implements of self-destruction—detainees have been known to sew up their lips or drink whole bottles of shampoo.

On the Mexican border, US officials have built sharp slopes along canals separating the two countries, making it difficult for anyone to climb out on the American side. The Clinton Administration launched a succession of militarized endeavors—Operation Blockade, Operation Hold the Line, Operation Gatekeeper—in the name of "prevention through deterrence." As a result, migrants and refugees now swim across rivers teeming with typhoid, cholera, and hepatitis, "holding their breaths under submerged bridges and along a twenty-foot culvert." Between 1994 and 2001, at least 1,700 migrants from Mexico died trying to reach the United States. Throughout its entire existence, by contrast, exactly 171 people died trying to cross the Berlin wall.

For all its pretensions to liberalism and openness, Western Europe has hardly been more welcoming. (Moorehead cites the case of one refugee in Britain leaving a suicide note that read, "You have to kill yourself in this country to prove that you would be killed in your own country.") In response, many Africans have attempted to sail surreptitiously across the Mediterranean in vessels the Phoenicians would have scuttled long ago.

On a stormy night in September 2002, to cite just one of Moorehead's examples, a boat built to carry fifteen people went down less than 100 meters off Sicily's southern coast. As tourists danced unknowingly at a popular bar on the beach, thirty-five of the 150 Liberians on board drowned and twenty more disappeared. Watching the bloated bodies float to shore over a period of days was gruesome enough. But what truly haunted Vera Sciortino, a local resident, was the thought of hungry fish feeding on the corpses. The inverse of little Oskar Matzerath's mother in *The Tin Drum*—so filled with disgust upon seeing a horse's head writhing with eels that she begins to eat fish obsessively—Vera was never able to eat fish again.

It would be some comfort if we could confine the misery of life on the move to Western Europe, North America and Australia. But as Moorehead reminds us, 90 percent of all refugees remain in the region of their birth, and Iran, Pakistan and Tanzania receive the most refugees of any country in the world. Not surprisingly, these and other governments are just as reluctant—and certainly less able, economically—to absorb people from abroad.

Cairo, the *mise-en-scène* of *Human Cargo*, is "a staging post" for "Africa's displaced people...a step on a journey that should, but seldom does, move from terror to safety." As they wait for the gates of Fortress Europe or North America to open, refugees and migrants from Liberia and Sudan are hassled and beaten by the Egyptian police, robbed in the streets and forced to stand in lines at immigration centers that would make the most harried holiday shopper blanch—only to find at the end of the day that the store has closed or run out of goods. For many migrants, homelessness turns out to be a kind of salvation: Only in Cairo's uncharted slums and squats can they be somewhat assured of protection from the police.

In southern Lebanon Palestinian refugees suffer from the racism of their hosts, which keeps them out of jobs and power, and from the fear among the Lebanese that this largely Muslim refugee population will upset the country's delicate confessional balance. Forbidden to expand their refugee camps "outward," Palestinians are forced to build Manhattans of misery out of cinder blocks and scraps of tin: "Much of the inner camp [of Shatila] is almost completely dark, the daylight reduced to a pale glimmer by the overarching buildings and the canopy of wires that dangle not far above the head. Windows open onto walls." Where migrants to New York City like my grandfather could look out such windows and see the world, Palestine's refugees gaze out on a road to nowhere.

Like Moorehead, Seyla Benhabib, a professor of political science and philosophy at Yale, writes out of a moral concern for the rights of refugees and migrants and the wrongs done to them. To this she adds a refreshingly cosmopolitan vision of travel and association between and among different peoples. Unlike Moorehead, though, Benhabib is a political theorist, whose profession requires a certain abstraction from the concrete and often ugly details of the refugee experience. If Moorehead's credo is no ideas but in things, Benhabib's, by necessity, is no things but in ideas.

Lest readers assume that the first enterprise is more to their liking, Benhabib's *The Rights of Others* shows—unflinchingly, astutely and bravely—that immigration remains such a pitched battle in the West because it is part of a larger war of ideas, fought between two contending, even morally attractive, ideals. On the one side are the rights of democratic polities to govern themselves. On the other are the rights of asylum seekers, refugees and migrants to enter, remain and ultimately join those polities as full and equal members.

In many ways, this conflict is a version of the old debate between liberalism and democracy, between a commitment to universal rights, which cannot be chal-

The Life I Didn't Lead

took place in Italy:
black figs and gilded apricots;
a clatter of bells;
the vivid repartee of birds
as migratory as I was.
Or in Paris with its classical maze
of buildings and bridges
where French perfected itself
in my mouth, already lush
with wine and bruised with kisses.
A flute of chilled prosecco
every morning...that beautiful
Belgian boy each afternoon...
a single yellow rose became
my long-stemmed bookmark.
I learned the world the way
some women learn their kitchens—
all those unswept alleys, the scoured look
of deserts, the knife-edged borders
between men and countries.
And time went by so slowly,
and so fast, a river
whose source is hidden high
in the curve of a mountain:
freeze and frantic meltdown
and freeze again.
Like pebbles in that riverbed
there were perfect
children along the way
and poems from time to time.
But the art that mattered
was the life led fully,
stanza by swollen stanza.

Linda Pastan

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lenged or overturned, and a vision of mass participation, which puts everything, even rights, up to a vote. But when liberal universalists—or libertarians and free marketers—square off against populist democrats over immigration, seemingly innocent moral positions can assume toxic political form. One side bends toward the dissolution of all borders, toward an international regime that would protect rights everywhere, inviting charges of despotism and imperialism. The other slouches toward national chauvinism, insisting that the people have a right to preserve "their way of life" from intruding others.

Benhabib argues that the second camp—which includes a surprisingly wide array of defenders in academia—makes a series of mistakes. Beyond ignoring the fact that most nations have already committed themselves, by treaty, to welcoming refugees and asylum seekers (though not economic migrants), many populists assume that the nation has a fixed identity, that its mix of customs, habits and history is indivisible and unchanging rather than conflicted and in flux.

Immigrants and refugees, in this view, threaten rather than renew or enrich a people. But "peoplehood," Benhabib reminds us, "is an aspiration; it is not a fact." A list of titles from the past three decades—Eugen Weber's *Peasants Into Frenchmen*, Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities*, Noel Ignatiev's *How the Irish Became White* and Rogers Smith's *Stories of Peoplehood*—echoes her argument that nations are made, not born, and that stories and myths, laws and institutions, are the necessary instruments of their making.

The most noxious element of the populist position, according to Benhabib, is that it dissolves the ideal of democracy in the illusions of blood, ethnicity and sameness. As all of us learned in high school or college, early Americans—like Americans today—were fundamentally divided about questions of power and authority. It was not their common racial stock but divisive conflicts among them, and between them and those who did not share their ethnicity or heritage, that set the nation on its faltering and unsteady march toward greater freedom and equality. Democracy is thus a political art, Benhabib observes, not a cultural or racial inheritance. Just as nothing in the literature or veins of a nation predisposes it to democracy, nothing in the immigrant precludes him or her from contributing to democracy.

In fact, one could argue—and Benhabib does—that immigrants sustain and expand democracy by fighting for rights and broadening popular notions of "we, the people." This point was brought home to me one Saturday eight years ago, when I was organizing in Los Angeles around several items on the ballot: a referendum on bilingual education, another on the political contributions of labor unions and a city council election. Walking door to door with a Spanish-speaking hotel worker from Guatemala, I listened to her explain to her neighbors the ins and outs of American electoral law, the powers of local versus state governments and the US Constitution. The irony was not lost on me: Not only do immigrants deepen democracy; they sometimes understand its substance and procedures better than its native proponents do.

But if Benhabib refuses to join the second camp, she is also wary of the first. Though she finds the notion of a world without borders morally attractive, she fears that its political embodiment could be dangerous. Inherent in the idea of democracy, she argues, is that the authors of the law should be its subjects and that the subjects of the law should be its authors. Unless we imagine a world government or international-rights regime—which would radically dilute the power each individual exercises over and through her national government—we have to accept that democracy requires a territorially bounded space. As she points out, where "empires have frontiers," extending as far as the metropolis can rule, "democracies have borders."

Benhabib's understanding of democracy as a territorially bounded unit does pose some problems, which she herself acknowledges. On the one hand, she favors a liberal immigration regime of "porous" but not "open" borders—where, first, asylum seekers and refugees, and second, migrants (in that order of preference) would be allowed to enter a country and, after a specified period of time, offered the opportunity to join it as citizens. But given her commitment to democratic deliberation—and the likelihood that many people would reject her preferred regime—how can Benhabib insist upon that regime, over and against the expressed wishes of the people? On the other hand, if those who are subject to a nation's laws should be its authors, why shouldn't immigrants have a say in formulating those laws? Surely no one is more subject to those laws than they.

Benhabib's solution is to insist that all nations, particularly democracies, must ground their immigration policies in standards of argument and justification that everyone—including the immigrant—

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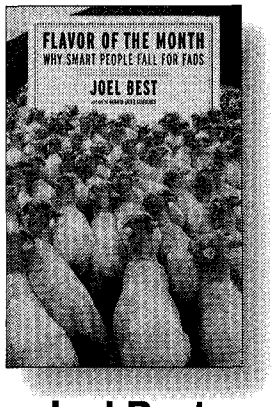

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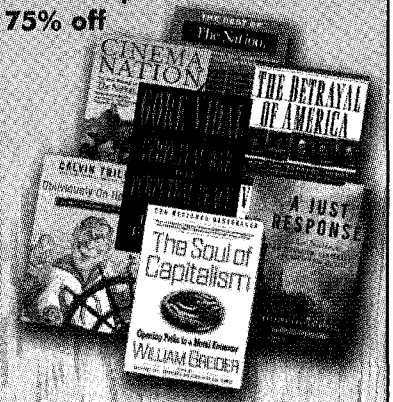

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would accept as reasonable. These are standards that "you would accept if you were in my situation and I were in yours" and that treat men and women as individuals capable of rational debate and justification. Because these ideals of reciprocity and rational justification are the moral underpinning of liberal democracy, such democracies must not stray from them in their immigration policies.

What this means in practice is that no democracy can bar people from entering or, if they have already entered, from becoming citizens, because of their "race, gender, religion, ethnicity, language community, or sexuality." Criteria like these would not be acceptable to all peoples. Nor do such criteria treat an immigrant or potential immigrant as someone who can enter a rational discussion with us.

At the same time, nations can require immigrants to "show certain qualifications, skills, and resources." Because everyone can understand why a nation would need or want people with those skills or resources, these criteria would be acceptable to everyone. Nations can also establish "language competence" and "a certain proof of civic literacy" as conditions, where applicable, for entry or citizenship. Such criteria "do not deny" an immigrant's capacity for dialogue or rationality. On the contrary, their very premise recognizes that capacity. Democratic debate over immigration may not be a free-for-all, then, but it does leave room for disagreement.

From Benhabib's earliest work on Habermas and the Frankfurt School, her high standard of argument and justification has always been the best advertisement for a certain kind of cosmopolitan liberalism. There is likewise much to admire in this book, not least her willingness to give sound reasons for her positions. But *The Rights of Others* raises questions, at least for me, that need to be answered.

For starters, why should linguistic competence be a factor—or acceptable as an item of democratic debate—in determining citizenship? As my comrade for a day in Los Angeles would attest, a non-English speaker in the United States not only can get and hold down a job; she can also turn out the vote. Why should a non-English speaker be allowed to mobilize for American democracy but not to join it as a citizen?

Conversely, why should we require "a certain proof of civic literacy" for immigrants seeking to become citizens? I know a great many native-born Americans who could not pass such a test. Why should immigrants have to prove that which the native-born need not—and, in some cases, could not—prove? Doesn't this double standard assume the very view that Benhabib so skillfully takes apart elsewhere in her book, namely, that Americans take in democracy with their mother's milk?

While the economic criteria Benhabib accepts—"qualifications, skills, and resources"—avoid the ascriptive criteria of race and gender she rejects (though the two may be more closely linked in practice, a point I shall return to shortly), it's not clear that these criteria stand the test of reciprocity she favors. Would a poor immigrant really accept the stringent economic qualifications that a middle-class citizen has voted for? Would she accept the underlying reasons for those justifications? Would an unemployed worker in a rich country accept the liberal immigration regime that a wealthy employer in that same country has lobbied for? Could each of us—citizen and immigrant, rich and poor, employer and employee—find a position that all of us would accept? I doubt it.

Shouldn't the baleful history of US intervention in Latin America influence our policies toward economic migrants from the south?

And what would such economic criteria look like in practice? Only people with advanced computer skills or a college degree need apply? Only those who have held down a job for five years can stay and become citizens? (The more likely scenario, of course, is that the employing classes of a prosperous country will favor liberal immigration policies—or allow, with a nod and a wink, millions of undocumented workers to cross the border in order to staff the bottom tiers of the economy.) It's ironic that a regime implementing Benhabib's criteria of "marketable skills" could prove more restrictive than the United States that allowed my grandfather into this country a century ago.

Benhabib could reply that yesterday's United States is not today's, that America in 1900 required millions of uneducated workers from Eastern and Southern Europe and East and Southeast Asia in order to build its expanding industrial economy. She might be right, but that only raises a deeper, more troubling, question: Has Benhabib offered a critique of society or—in some important respects—merely reflected it? How far does her theory, with its stringent opposition to policies of ascription and mild toleration of economic exclusions, depart from contemporary norms? Though I doubt that Benhabib personally would favor economic exclusions—she claims that democracies can institute them, not that she would support them—it says something about our moment that they can be accepted, without much argument, as the inevitable price of democracy.

There was a time when nothing so vexed left-liberals as how to justify such economic distinctions—not in the realm of immigration policies but in capitalism's distribution of resources. Facing worker activism at home and then communist insurgencies abroad, theorists from John Stuart Mill to T.H. Marshall to John Rawls were forced either to defend the inequalities of capitalism or to offer some program for their amelioration and gradual abolition. Through their efforts, classical liberalism was nudged, ever so slowly, toward something approaching social democracy.

Benhabib has neither forgotten nor abandoned this heritage. In one section of her book, she discusses the inequalities of the international political economy, arguing that prosperous nations often accumulate their wealth through the misery of poorer nations—a fact, as she points out, that Rawls never confronted in his discussions of global economic justice. But the inferences Benhabib draws—and doesn't draw—from this discussion suggest the contemporary weakness of that heritage. In countering the claims of Rawlsian leftists that the globe's resources and assets should be redistributed in order to benefit the world's "least advantaged," Benhabib writes that we lack "clear and non-controversial judgments about who is to count as 'the least advantaged' member of society." Yet even more controversy surrounds the ascriptive identities she wishes to take off the table. (Controversy would also surround, were they subject to genuine international debate, the economic criteria that Benhabib argues everyone would accept.) Why does one controversy inspire her to push and another to pull?

More important, Benhabib derives no moral conclusion about immigration policy from these international inequities. Distinguishing between economic and ascriptive criteria in theory, she overlooks how they are intertwined in practice—in

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part because of the very history of slavery and imperialism that she discusses. Race and class have made a witch's brew of inequality in the United States, and many of the poorest classes in today's Europe hail from its former colonies in Africa and the Middle East. If I understand Benhabib's criteria correctly, it would not be unreasonable for Europe to refuse entry or deny citizenship to these men and women and their families on economic grounds, even though the motivation or effect of such refusals could be entirely skewed by the color of their skin.

Whether or not Benhabib's distinction holds up in reality, shouldn't the mere fact that the United States has ravaged its neighbors to the south play some role in its decisions about whether to accept economic migrants from that region? Shouldn't the misery that Western Europe imposed upon Africa and elsewhere figure in the moral calculus of its immigration policies? Shouldn't these histories of exploitation at least mitigate the "qualifications, skills, and resources" that wealthier countries require of newcomers? As South Asians and Caribbeans in Britain used to say, "We are here because you were there."

Benhabib and Moorehead both show that people flee not only persecution and civil war but also poverty and destitution. That this reality—and the contributions of Western Europe and the United States to it—is not reflected in our contemporary immigration regimes or in the work of our best theorists is a problem. I wish I could say that it was Benhabib's alone. Sadly, I think it's ours, too. ■

FILMS

The Wild Child

STUART KLAWANS

L'ENFANT • V FOR VENDETTA • SHAKESPEARE BEHIND BARS • TORO NEGRO THE DEVIL'S MINER • MARDI GRAS: MADE IN CHINA

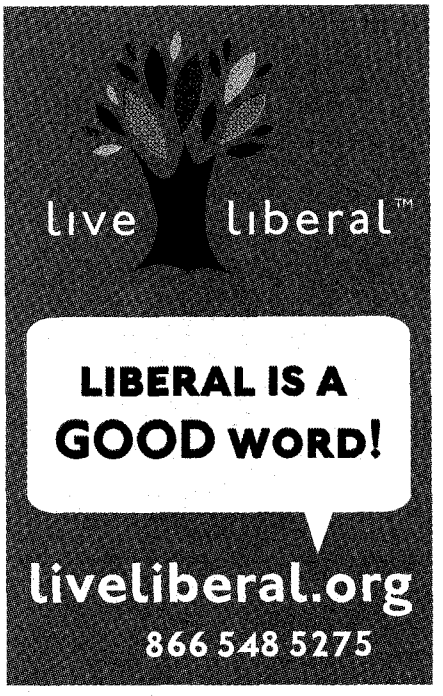
Young, thatch-headed Jérémie Renier has a paradox of a face. The level eyes are shadowed, the cheeks are hollow and creases have set around the mouth, where his lips tug upward in a chronic grin. The features are too old for his twenty or so years; and yet they also seem unfinished, as if the jackknife of experience were still carving them. You can see the want of modeling in the nose and chin, squared off by preliminary strokes and awaiting refinement. The plan, perhaps, is to make him handsome—or to forgo boyishness for a rougher effect.

You have plenty of time to think about this face while watching *L'Enfant*, because the lens stays close to Renier, as it generally does to actors in the films of Jean-Pierre and Luc Dardenne. This, too, is a paradox. The character Renier plays in *L'Enfant*, like so many of the Dardennes' protagonists, is a young scuffler of the Belgian streets who sleeps sometimes in the homeless shelter and sometimes in a cardboard box by the river's edge. He feels no need for a fixed abode; yet the camera's frame houses him, snugly and perpetually, however restless he becomes.

In the role of Bruno, a petty thief knocking around an industrial town, Renier is so much in motion that he can barely pause to look at his newborn son. When freckled, dirty-blond Sonia (Déborah François) tracks him down, having just come out of a hospital he hadn't bothered to visit, she finds Bruno engaged in his version of multitasking: walking down the middle of a street so he can panhandle from motorists while looking out for a burglary in progress. She shows him the bundle in her arms; he responds with a boisterous sexual overture and a cell-phone call to his accomplices. What's the kid's name? Oh, right—Jimmy.

Here, in summary, you have *L'Enfant*, a film about roads and cell phones, decaying buildings and people who ought to be budding, indifference masked by buffoonery, the belief that money just floats around. When concentrated in and around a soft kid who mistakenly thinks he's tough, these elements naturally produce the crime on which the plot turns: Bruno sells his son to unknown traffickers in exchange for a wad of cash.

An item for the tabloids, you might



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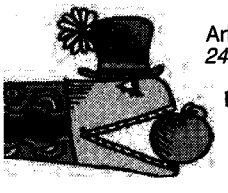
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think. What could make you care about it, other than the peculiarities of an actor's face, or the notion that you, too, might have been a Bruno, but for the grace of God and a grasp of cause and effect? There is no question of your identifying with the character; if the Dardennes give their sympathy to anyone, it's Sonia. She's the figure you see first (in one of those tight, hand-held closeups), the one who takes you through the streets and leads you to Bruno; and after his story is played out, she's present again in the last shot, to inspire and share the single, profound moment of catharsis that concludes the film. But she's not the one on whom *L'Enfant* dwells. The film lingers on Bruno—and simply by doing so, it justifies this worthless man as a worthy central character.

Once he's decided to sell the baby, the rhythm of *L'Enfant* changes; the jumpiness of the early scenes gives way to a steadier pace as the camera follows Bruno to the outskirts of the city, to his rendezvous with the unseen traffickers. The Dardennes want you to experience the lengths to which he'll go for his crime. And when he gets to the scene of the exchange, where he stands alone in a dimly lit apartment, the Dardennes want you to know what it's like for him to wait, for once in his life. Half in shadow, he listens anxiously for the buyers to come and go. (It's easy to hear footsteps in a Dardenne film; there's never a music track, only ambient sound.) After long, long moments comes a brief interruption—Bruno rushes toward his money. And then time stretches again, as the Dardennes insist on showing Bruno's return to the city.

This patient rhythm, which somehow will continue even during a chase through the streets, has nothing to do with the ironic, distancing longueurs of a Jarmusch or Kaurismäki, or with the meditativeness of a Hou Hsiao-hsien. Like the Dardennes' close framing and tracking, their use of natural light and ambient sound, it's something more intimate—a way of clinging to the character and feeling the moral weight of his actions, even when he does not. That's why it's possible to care about inept, thoughtless Bruno, and care deeply, when at last he, too, feels the gravity.

He has been through his tabloid-crime adventure. He has ended the spree (if that's what you'd call it) by finally doing the right thing, though not entirely for the right reason. Now, in the closing scene, his cockiness gone, Bruno sits down with Sonia and for once shows an emotion appropriate to the occasion. What sets it off? An offer of vending-machine coffee; everything. The mystery, in this film that has been made so studiously out in the open, without mysteries, is that even a plastic cup now matters. Bruno is meeting Sonia for the first time, at the very end of *L'Enfant*—and instead of being restless, he's moving.

War is peace. Ignorance is knowledge. And the torrent of argle-bargle coursing through *V for Vendetta* is a transgressive, liberating discourse set loose within the most eye-popping thrill-ride of the year!

Your attention, please, for the latest exercise in double-think by the Wachowski brothers, authors of *The Matrix Revolutions* and other masterpieces.

The Future! England grovels before a huge televisual image of John Hurt, his unfortunate dentition (even nastier in IMAX) forever issuing spittle-flecked decrees. This is the face of a fascist new order, which rules (as you might have guessed) by the old order's usual methods: propaganda broadcasts, manufactured fears, police violence, shadowy prison camps. Who, or what, can challenge the regime? Not a man, surely, but an idea incarnate; a masked, wigged and caped avenger, with cool knives and karate moves; a living reminder of the spirit of Guy Fawkes and his Gunpowder Plot; in a letter, V.

Or, more prosaically, Hugo Weaving, here done up in a cheap Halloween costume, spouting alliterative nonsense and Shakespearean tags in the voice of Keane the Elder.

Now, into V's hands falls one Evey (Natalie Portman), a lovely but apparently dim-witted young thing who wanders the streets after curfew and accepts invitations from masked men she's only just met. She will hate V. She will love him. She will sigh, in voiceover, about the impossibility of kissing an idea, and yet she will tenderly press her lips to the plastic of V's mask. I don't think she knows what she wants.

But if you want simulated knife-throwing, chaotically edited fight scenes, ponderous musical clichés (the 1812 Overture, Beethoven's Fifth), wholesale borrowings from *1984*, strained allusions to the Bush Administration and Fox News, lengthy and yet inconsequential protests against the ostracism of gays and lesbians, a muddled girl-in-peril plot and some gee-whiz production design, *V for Vendetta* is the movie for you. Never mind that the Wachowskis' characteristically logorrheic script defeats at every turn first-time direc-

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tor James McTeigue, who has been asked to make a comic-book movie but can't possibly keep it going. *V for Vendetta* is about the *idea* of a comic-book movie, you see, and the *idea* of liberation.

Some liberation. By dint of his heroics, V gets England's narcotized citizenry to abandon their television sets, gather in the streets and become—an audience, passively watching a sound-and-light show. The cops, being just ideas of themselves, do nothing. The bombing of the Houses of Parliament—what an excellent target, for someone striking back at a dictator!—is also just an idea, and therefore can be very pretty, for a wanton act of destruction. And should all these big ideas give you a headache, Evey will explain that this blow for freedom has been struck by (I quote) "the Count of Monte Cristo."

Revenge is liberty. I can't recall hearing that particular idea from Tolstoy, Gandhi, Martin Luther King, Vaclav Havel, Nelson Mandela, the Dalai Lama or the makers of *Batman Begins*. But, as the Wachowski brothers would say, that's another paradigm.

Documania: Though unable to do justice to the many extraordinary documentaries now in release, I might at least summarize a few.

Shakespeare Behind Bars, directed by Hank Rogerson, takes you into the Luther Luckett Correctional Complex in Kentucky, where theater director Curt Tofteland is beginning his seventh season of volunteer work with a company of inmates. Each year, he directs them in a play by Shakespeare, the choice this time being *The Tempest*. A prison is like an island, Tofteland reasons, where the inhabitants have time to think about the theme of forgiveness. In description, this may sound like *Waiting for Guffman* in striped uniforms; but on the screen, *Shakespeare Behind Bars* is absorbing, illuminating, wrenching and provocative. You get to know half a dozen of these Calibans—killers, armed robbers, child molesters—who do think hard about forgiveness, as they struggle to find the truth of themselves within Shakespeare's truth.

Toro Negro (*Black Bull*), by Pedro González-Rubio and Carlos Armella, is a portrait of the young bullfighter Fernando Pacheco, whose performances at festivals and fairs in Yucatán have earned him the nickname El Suicida. You will see him gored and trampled (a consequence of his complete lack of technique, not to mention his alcoholism), and you will see him pass the idle hours by alternately cuddling and brawling with Romelia, an older woman who has taken him in. The domestic fights end when someone from behind the camera appeals to Fernando to stop. The "bullfights" end when he's carried off, or else stabs clumsily at a half-starved beast until it collapses. This is harsh, intense, yet artfully shaped filmmaking that continually takes you one step further than you thought you'd go.

The Devil's Miner, by Kief Davidson and Richard Ladkani, is an extraordinarily powerful account of two brothers—14-year-old Basilio and 12-year-old Bernardino—who risk their lives in Bolivia's mines. When on the outside, Basilio goes to school (he hopes someday to escape the mines) and prays to Jesus. When on the inside, he works twenty-four-hour shifts on a nearly exhausted vein and gives coca-leaf offerings to a clay idol of Tio, the devil who controls the mine. A Human Rights Watch title of First Run Features, *The Devil's Miner* will be broadcast by PBS following its theatrical release.

Mardi Gras: Made in China was screened in the 2005 Human Rights Watch International Film Festival, before Hurricane Katrina had wiped out half of filmmaker David Redmon's subject. The other half—a wretched factory in China, where Mardi Gras beads are made—is presumably standing and deserves your attention. This is one of the best films I know about real (as opposed to op-ed) globalization. Please welcome it to the theaters. ■

EVENTS

CALIFORNIA

Paul Robeson Exhibit

■ An exhibit, *Paul Robeson, The Tallest Tree in Our Forest*, opens at the African American Museum and Library at Oakland (AAMLO) on April 8 and runs through July 8. The Bay Area Paul Robeson Centennial Committee, curator of the exhibit's memorabilia, is seeking additional material for this exhibit and for our developing permanent Paul Robeson archive. If you have any items that you would consider donating to our collection, please contact as soon as possible: research@bayarearobeson.org.

MASSACHUSETTS

Rethinking Marxism 2006

■ October 26-28, University of Massachusetts. Join Ernesto Laclau, Julie Graham, Stephen Resnick, Richard Wolff, Susan Buck-Morss, Kojin Karatani, Liza Featherstone, Stephen Cullenberg, David F. Ruccio, Susan Jahoda, Antonio Callari, Warren Montag, Sut Jhally and others in an international gathering of students, scholars and activists. The journal *Rethinking Marxism* invites proposals for videos, performances, papers and panels. Instructions for submitting proposals (deadline is August 1) and registration are available at www.rethinkingmarxism2006.org.

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Pete Seeger Sings!

■ New York-Tipitapa Sister City Project. Join Pete Seeger and Tao Rodriguez-Seeger for an intimate evening of stories, conversation, songs, hope and inspiration. For Us. For Nicaragua. April 16, 5 PM. At the home of Dr. Arthur Levine, president of Teachers College, Columbia University, and Linda Fentiman. Hosted by Dr. Darlyne Bailey, vice president of academic affairs and dean of the college. Limited seating. Donation: $250 per person. Easy payment: www.tipitapa.org. (646) 610-2215 or PeteSeegerEvent@tipitapa.org. Make check payable to: Dos Pueblos, 2565 Broadway #173, New York, NY 10025.

Voices of a People's History of the United States

■ Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove introduce and narrate an evening of dramatic readings from *Voices of a People's History of the United States*. Friday, March 24, 6:30 PM, at Cooper Union's Great Hall, 7 East 7th Street, New York City. With Kurt Vonnegut, Erin Cherry, Brian Jones, Deepa Fernandes, Harris Yulin, Suheir Hammad and other guests. Free.

Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal

■ Join Howard Zinn and Anthony Arnove for the launch of Arnove's new book, *Iraq: The Logic of Withdrawal*, with foreword and afterword by Zinn. Introduction by Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!* Saturday, March 25, 1 PM. Quaker Friends Meeting House, 15 Rutherford Place (at 15th Street), NYC. Suggested donation: $5–$10.

Veterans of the Abraham Lincoln Brigade

■ Join us in honoring Cindy Sheehan and Veterans for Peace at the reunion of the Lincoln Brigade. Sunday, April 30, 1:30 PM, at Cooper Union Auditorium (Astor Place, East 7th Street and 3rd Avenue). Featuring "Songs Against War: Voices of Anti-Warriors," a musical performance with Barbara Dane and Bruce Barthol; emcee Henry Foner. For tickets: (212) 674-5552; credit card: www.alba-valb.org/april30thtix.html.

Can't Stop Won't Stop

■ Join the Haymarket Forum Saturday, March 25, 7 PM, for a discussion with writer Jeff Chang about his groundbreaking book *Can't Stop Won't Stop: A History of the Hip-Hop Generation*, at Galapagos Art Space in Brooklyn. With Deepa Fernandes and Andy Hsiao, and a performance by DJ Rekha. 70 North Sixth, Williamsburg. NYC.haymarketforum.org. Free.

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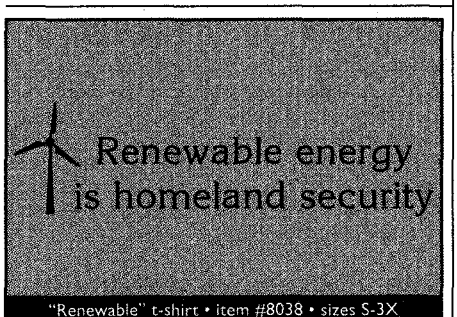

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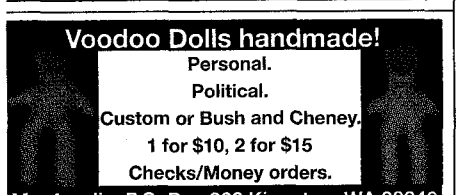

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LOS ANGELES, BRENTWOOD AREA. *Nation* discussion group forming. E-mail bernlandis@verizon.net.

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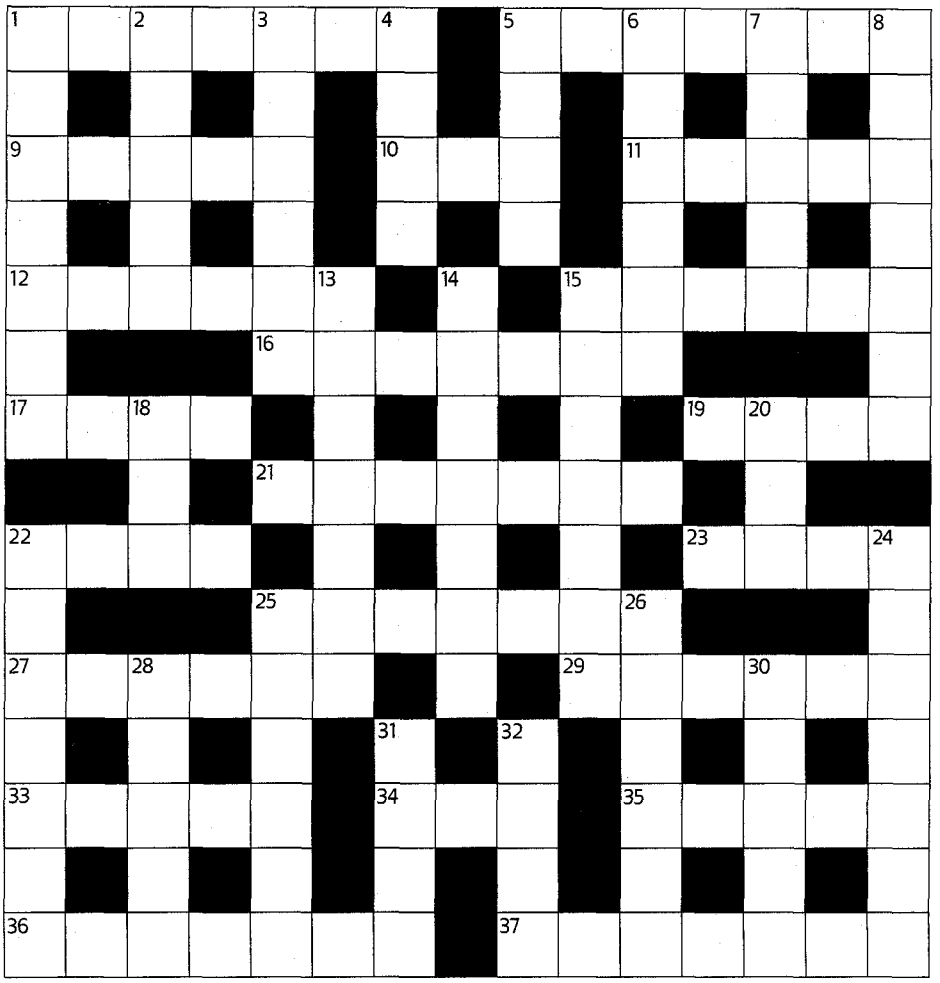
PUZZLE NO. 3029

FRANK W. LEWIS



ACROSS

1 and **5** His cane really helped him along! (7,7)

9, **10** and **11** The cry of the ultimate giver. (5,3,5)

12 Aggie might have been put on the line, if you did—but fell behind. (6)

15 The Power of the Screen? (6)

16 Those who float down the stream are not the kind that are sometimes made to ring. (7)

17 and **19** Completely worn out, with no life to what the cop has to patrol. (4,4)

21 What one sometimes has to cross to make things shorter. (7)

22 See 2 down

23, **34** and **30** down Not very specific, when it comes to location, though the last fits the first to a T. (4,3,5)

25 Your stomach might be with soda, but the Pilgrims did it first! (7)

27 Did this tribe have nothing on the wise men? (A bone takes a long time to make it.) (6)

29 A tale-teller let loose, as a way to make people nervous. (6)

33, **34** and **35** Like a small drink with lots of sugar, those who hate to see things drawn out might prefer them this way. (5,3,5)

36 See 3 down

37 Does the old Dutchman get to call me Henry? (7)

DOWN

1 Made a move on board, where the actors came first. (7)

2 and **22** across The biggest part of a triangle is where the ships are loaded. (9)

3 and **36** across Evidently the missive can't be improved, though the copying often is. (6,7)

4 and **5** Places the hands where it might tighten the collar. (8)

6 Say incorrectly the law is broken first, every time! (6)

7 The goal may be confused, although it's about right for such slow direction. (5)

8 The way Jock says there's no smell to what is brewing? (7)

13 What the dilettante does comes up bad, with a half-blessing! (7)

14 Marked with a furrow, its rate might be confusing. (7)

15 What Mr. Rogers rides has to be pulled in order to make "Colt"useful. (7)

18 and **20** See 32

22 Knock off and have a bite to eat, when the plumbing becomes inoperable. (5,2)

24 What one casts is important, especially for an old German prince. (7)

25 You just have to boil when you get to look at such a common article! (6)

26 Get up angry, with the offspring sounding plumb crazy! (6)

28 In the morning, what belongs to you and me implies "Love in Paris." (5)

30 See 23 across

31 "Through" sounds like what the people on stage might be. (4)

32, **18** and **20** For two poached eggs on toast with the yokes broken, the waiter called for these on a raft and added, "Wreck 'em!" (First found in the garden!) (4,3,3)

SOLUTION TO PUZZLE NO. 3028

D	O	U	S	E	S		C	H	E	R	U	B	I	C
R		S		X		S		O		O		U		A
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C		U						M				I		L
R	O	M	A	N		C	A	P		M	U	S	I	C
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C	A	T	W	A	L	K	S		M	E	M	B	E	R

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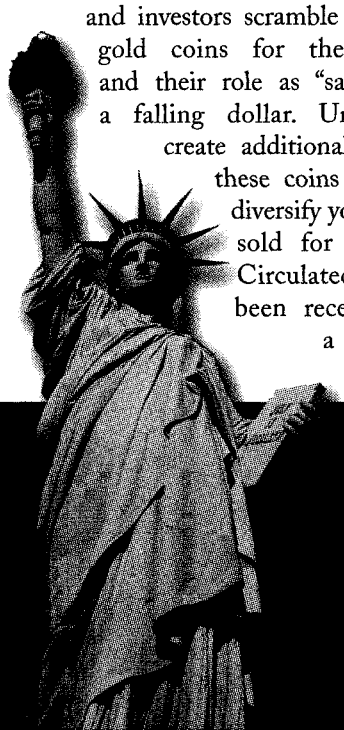

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